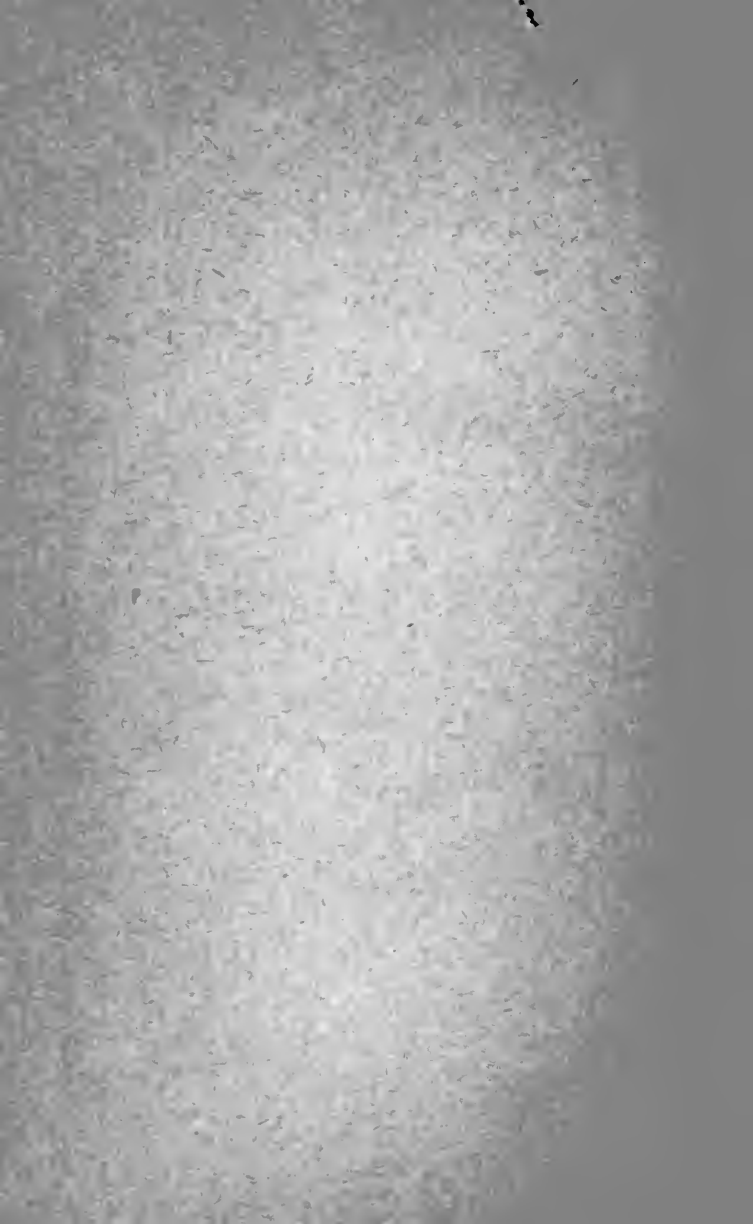
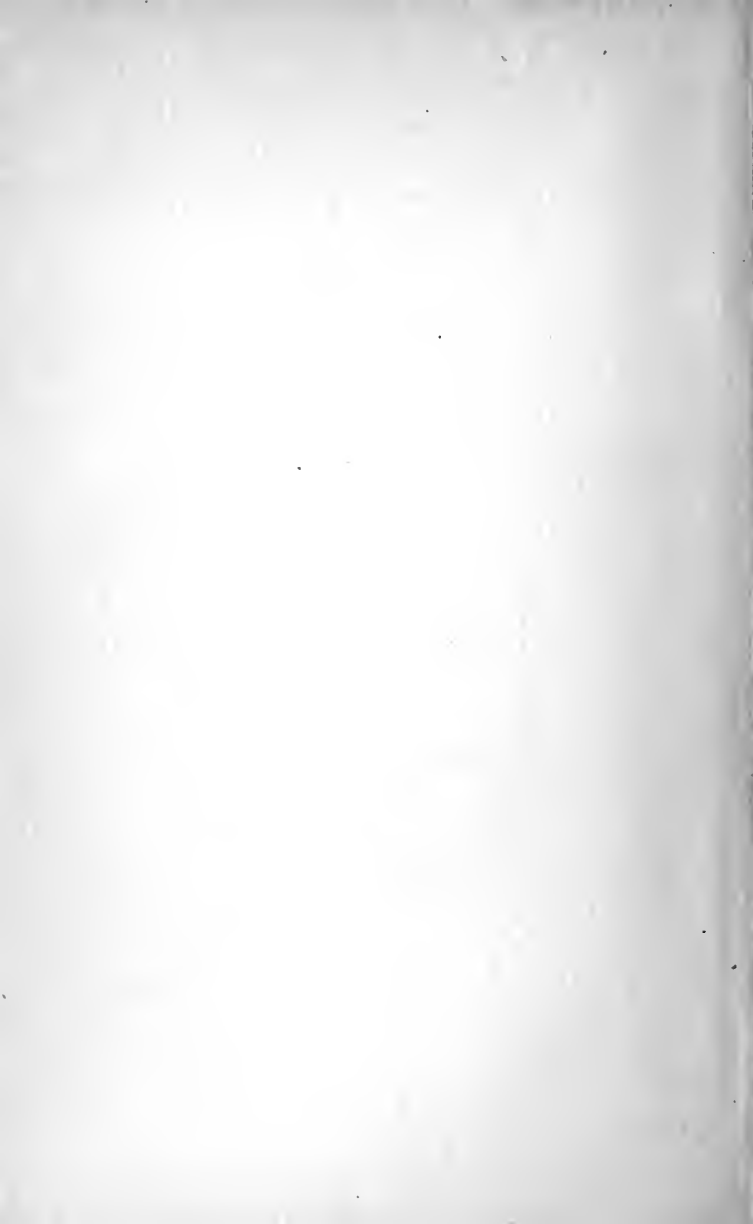




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Hard Maple.

Frontispiece.

HARD MAPLE.

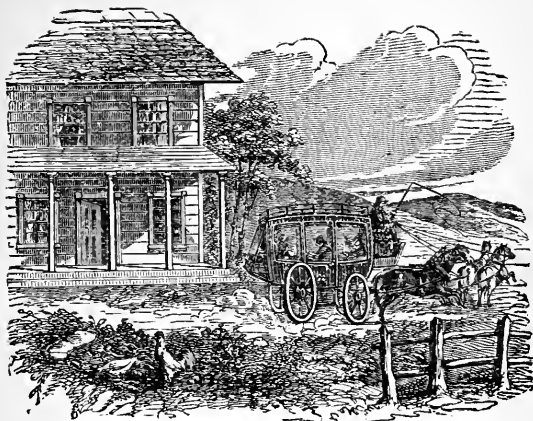
BY THE AUTHOR OF

'DOLLARS AND CENTS,' "MR. RUTHERFORD'S CHILDREN,"
"CASPER," "POND LILY STORIES," ETC.

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HARD MAPLE.

CHAPTER I.

SPRINGTIME had come — the spring of every thing. And first there was the grass, which constantly pushed up its little sharp green leaves into the sunlight, and scented the whole air. And there were the flowers — many a one in the dark ground, rising up towards the day.

(7)

As for the dandelions, they were up already — running a race with the grass, and then laughing out of their broad yellow faces.

The season was Spring, the time was the morning, the morning was cold. Not that it promised a cold day — but the sun was not up: here lay all the difficulty. The light in the east said he was coming, and the stars heard the news and withdrew; only a few bright ones yet showed their faces. The birds heard it too; and in the dark woods that rose up against the morning light, you could hear many a flutter and a chirp, which plainly showed that sparrows and robins and such little things cannot sleep with a light in their rooms. Cock-a-doodle was awake, and crowed as if he thought he had aroused the morning — instead of the morning him; and the pretty gray and brown hens looked down composedly from their roost, and waited till it should be time to get up. They had nothing to do to get breakfast ready, neither they nor the birds. “Behold the fowls of the air, which neither have storehouse nor barn; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.”

By the side of a public road which ran winding up and down among the hills, stood a large inn, where the people were all astir, early as it was. Smoke went up from the kitchen chimney, and lights shone out of the kitchen windows, and if Cock-a-doodle had seen the chicken which broiled gently over the red coals on the kitchen hearth, perhaps he would not have felt quite so cheerful.

By the time breakfast was ready and eaten, a great coach came to the door, drawn by three brown horses and one white one. And on the porch of the inn stood two men, ready to get into the coach; and more than that, there stood Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford, with Sybil and Chryssa, all ready to get in too.

The children were well muffled up, but they stood shivering and chilly in the morning air—their teeth chattering with getting up so early and eating a candle-light breakfast; but full of excitement as well; and if their teeth had chattered a little less, no doubt their tongues would have chattered a good deal more. As it was, they looked on in silence, but with intense interest.

Every thing was beautiful,—from the lumbering coach with its yellow sides and worn leather curtains, to the white frost that covered every blade of grass and clover leaf, and even spread itself over the top of the coach. Then the great house-dog came marching into the porch, and the children took hold of hands and drew closer together; and when a pretty tortoise-shell cat stepped softly in, Chryssa got hold of her at once, and had warm fingers and feelings directly.

Then when the coach was quite ready they got into it,—the two men on the back seat, and Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford on the front—for they liked that best; while Sybil and Chryssa sat on the middle seat, which had a long, broad leather strap for a back.

The coachman put so many trunks on the top of the coach, that Chryssa thought the roof never could bear it; and every minute she looked up, expecting to see the trunks coming down on her head, but they didn't come. Then a man climbed up to the roof and sat there with the trunks, the driver mounted to his seat and cracked his long

whip over the heads of the four horses, and then they were off,—Chryssa looking out of the window to get one more sight of the little tortoise-shell cat.

Now the sun came up, warming and lighting the tops of the trees, and shining between the branches into the very eyes of the little birds; then it erept slowly down and down, and sent a beam right through the old coach—in at one window and out at the other. The coach jogged on more merrily after that, and every body brightened up and looked out, to see how the sun wiped away the white frost, and how green the grass looked after such a washing. And this was the fashion of their journey,—for now they were off the level road and had got among the hills.

Of the four horses, two were always up in the world and two were always down. Sometimes the wheel horses looked from the top of a little height, upon the leaders who were at the bottom; and then when the wheel horses got to the bottom themselves, there were the leaders up above them, at the top of another little hill; whither they

must climb too, and drag the coach after them. The coach itself could not exactly follow the example of the horses, for it was all in one piece; but it did what it could. When the front went down, the back went up; and the minute the front went up, the back went down. Sometimes Chryssa was jumped forward head first into Mrs. Rutherford's lap, and sometimes it was all she could do to keep her feet any where. Sybil managed better, for she held fast of the coach leathers all the while, and so never lost her seat; but to pay for this, when the coach went down in front the two men came down too,—now against Sybil's head and now against the leather back of her seat. On such occasions Sybil would shake her head and pull on her bonnet, and wear a very fierce look which was meant for the two men; but as nobody saw it except Mr. Rutherford, it did no great harm and no good at all. Once Chryssa turned round and sat in Mrs. Rutherford's lap, to rest herself and keep still for a while; but it made her want to laugh so much, to see the two men come bobbing forward,

that she was glad to go back to her own seat again.

The road went on between green meadows and fields of grain that were greener yet, with little brooks, and tall forest trees, and rail fences, and villages. Wherever there was a village, the coach stopped. The coachman would drive furiously up to some little white house that had "POST OFFICE" written above the door; and then he would get down from his box, drag forth a great leathern bag full of letters and newspapers, and fling it down on the steps of the little house. Some one else picked it up and carried it in, and the coachman went in too, and sometimes staid so long that the children both got asleep. Then, when at last he came out, he had another great leathern bag in his hand, and when that was safely bestowed in the coach they set off again.

"Look, Sybil," said Chryssa,—"see those children on the steps. How they must wish they were going too!"

"Well, lean back, then," said Sybil, "and they won't see us go."

And both the children leaned back against the leathern strap till the post office was out of sight.

"This isn't a nice seat to lean back in," said Chryssa.

"Why I think it is," said Sybil — "good enough."

"O well, you're taller," said Chryssa, "but I can hardly reach the back at all."

"Never mind," said Sybil in a confidential whisper, — "maybe those men'll get out sometime, and then we'll have the whole coach to ourselves."

"That would be better than grandmamma's carriage," said Chryssa, "wouldn't it? It would be bigger."

"Yes, it would be bigger," said Sybil, "but it wouldn't be better, — it wouldn't be so good. Why this has only got old leather over the cushions, and the coach has got green cloth."

"Well the coach isn't so pretty as our barouche," said Chryssa.

"You don't love it so well, but I guess it's handsomer," said Sybil.

Chryssa sat silent a minute, trying to think how that could be.

"Sybil," said she suddenly, "suppose you tell me a story."

"What put that into your head?" said Sybil.

"I don't know," said Chryssa, — "thinking about the coach, I guess; and then I thought of the stories you used to tell me when we were going to Cleveland. Don't you know, Sybil? that one about the two grasshoppers? O that was a splendid story!"

"Well, I'll tell you one now," said Sybil. "About a fly."

"About a fly!" said Chryssa. "That one on Aunt Esther's bonnet?"

"No, not that one," said Sybil, "because he hasn't finished his adventures yet. There — now he's on the roof of the coach."

Here the coach itself gave a great jolt, and what became of the fly nobody knew, but Chryssa and Sybil tumbled right forward upon Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford. Nobody was hurt, however, but every body laughed; and when the coach got back to its position they got back to theirs.

"The fly's gone," said Chryssa. "But as the story wasn't to be about that one, it don't matter. Now begin."

"Once upon a time," said Sybil, "there was a fly with two wings."

"Why, *that* wasn't wonderful," said Chryssa. "I s'pose he had two eyes too."

"Very well," said Sybil, "but you'd better not laugh at the wings. They're very important."

"Well I'm not laughing," said Chryssa — "and I wasn't, much. Please go on."

"This fly set out on his travels," said Sybil. "He got tired of staying at home, and he thought he would travel about and find other countries where there were no spiders. So one morning he lit on a stage coach."

"Maybe it was that very fly," said Chryssa.

"No, it couldn't be," said Sybil. "That fly hasn't finished his travels yet. It might have been that fly's grandfather."

"That's very funny!" said Chryssa. "Well,— that fly's grandfather got on a stage coach ——"

"Yes," said Sybil, "and at first he sat on the coachman's hat. But he found it very cold up there, and besides he felt afraid that the hat might blow off."

"Well, if it did, he could fly right back to the coach," said Chryssa.

"But he hadn't found that out yet," said Sybil, "he was a young fly, you know; and besides it was cold; so he went inside and sat on a man's nose."

"*Then* he was warm," said Chryssa, laughing.

"He didn't stay long enough for that," said Sybil, "for the man knocked him off, and he fell down on the floor. Then he thought he was in a miserable condition; but presently he smelt something very sweet; and walking about he came to a large yellow crumb of gingerbread."

"*That* couldn't smell sweet," said Chryssa. "I don't like gingerbread."

"Well, the fly did," said Sybil. "You know he had never seen any before, and so hadn't got tired of it; and he began to eat his dinner at once. Suddenly it occurred to him that if there

were gingerbread crumbs in the bottom of the coach, there must be a large piece somewhere. Up he flew and left his dinner on the floor, and lighted on the very piece of gingerbread his crumb had come from, in a little girl's hand."

"Was the little girl all by herself?" asked Chryssa.

"No," said Sybil, "she belonged to the man with the nose."

"O Sybil!" cried Chryssa, laughing, "didn't they all have noses?"

"Yes, yes," said Sybil, laughing too, "but I mean the nose that the fly had been on."

"Well, did the little girl knock him off too?" said Chryssa.

"Yes, she knocked him off, and he came back again; and then she held the piece of gingerbread up to the window, so, — look, Chryssa, — and gave him a great knock out of the coach, — and there he was in the middle of the road. The worst of it was, he was in a mudpuddle."

"Then the coach went on without him?" said Chryssa.

"Indeed it did," said Sybil. "How was he to get into the air to fly after it?"

"But what made you make such a short story?" said Chryssa. "You needn't have killed him so soon."

"Why he isn't dead, child!" said Sybil — "at least he wasn't. Don't flies ever get out of mud-puddles? Give me a gingercake, Chryssa, out of the basket."

"But you haven't finished the story," said Chryssa.

"I'm hungry," said Sybil. "The fly must wait."

By the time Sybil had eaten half her ginger-cake, however, the coach stopped at a larger post office than usual, and every body got out. The children jumped down very gladly, and twisted and stretched themselves into all sorts of positions — so cramped were they with sitting still all the morning.

"Just think," said Sybil, "this morning we were so glad to get in, and now we're so glad to get out!"

"Because we're so tired," said Chryssa, with another twist. "What's that horse doing over there?"

"Why the people are taking all the horses to the stable," said Sybil. "Horses can't travel all day without eating, any more than people."

"I shouldn't think they could so much," said Chryssa, "because they do all the work. But I mean that horse that stands over there by himself, — he's walking the whole time, but he don't get away."

"O I know what that is," said Sybil, — "that's a treadmill. The horse steps and steps on the wheel to turn it round, and he can't stop, because something would hurt his feet."

"Well, don't it hurt 'em to go on?" said Chryssa.

"No, I guess not," said Sybil. "I guess it tires 'em."

"There's a peacock," said Chryssa, "and a guinea hen. What a funny place!"


"Come," said Sybil, "let's go in. They're all going, and Aunt Esther's waiting for us."

If Chryssa thought it was a funny place from the outside view, she thought so still more when they got within. They went into a little parlor to lay off their things for a while, and rest,—but Chryssa could hardly find time to do any thing but look about. The walls were covered with paper of the brightest colors—blue, red, and orange;—great bunches of hemlock and pine hung over the looking-glass; and higher still, some white, downy thistle balls. The chairs were black, and painted with red and blue flowers; and the pictures that hung round the room were more queer than all. Wild, fly-away-looking ladies, on wild, run-away-looking horses; gentlemen in very strange uniforms, sometimes on horseback, with their steeds rearing up on two legs, and sometimes on foot, holding the same steeds by the bridle. Chryssa went from one to the other, and then back again,—standing up on the black chairs, and laying one of her little hands on each side of the queer picture, on the gay-colored paper.

“Come, Chryssa,” said Mrs. Rutherford, “don’t you want something to eat?”

Chryssa left the fly-away ladies and came to the table. Some one had brought in a plate of crackers and another of cheese, and a large apple pie ; but Mrs. Rutherford took some sandwiches out of her basket, and on them they made a very good dinner.

CHAPTER II.

“UNT ESTHER,” said Chryssa, as she walked about the room with a sandwich in her hand, “what’s this queer box for?”

“What box?” said Mrs. Rutherford. “I am afraid, my dear, that some of your crumbs will grease the carpet.”

“O no,” said Chryssa, turning round and showing a plate in the other hand; — “see, Aunt Esther, I don’t let ’em fall. But I mean this box in the corner. It’s got little aprons in it — pink ones, with white braid; and socks, and caps, and pincushions. And here’s a red satin bag in the corner.”

“Those are to sell,” said Mrs. Rutherford.

“O!” said Chryssa. “But who’s to buy them?”

“Any body that chooses,” said her aunt smiling. “The people who made the aprons and pincushions put them there to sell; and when they

are sold the money will be given to the poor, or perhaps to some benevolent society."

"Have you bought any thing?" asked Chryssa.

"No. There is nothing in that box which I want."

"But I thought you liked to give money to poor people," said Chryssa.

"So I do,—but must I take a red satin bag in exchange?"

"Why no," said Chryssa laughing,— "I s'pose you needn't unless you want to. But I thought maybe the people would feel bad to come in every day and see it there."

"Make haste, Chryssie," said Sybil,— "they're bringing out the horses."

Chryssa came to the window.

"Those aren't *our* horses," she said.

"Yes they are," said Sybil.

"Why, our horses were three of 'em brown and one of 'em white," said Chryssa,— "and here's a grey horse, and a black horse, and two spotted ones."

"Well they're our horses, for all that," said

Sybil. "Don't you see they're standing by our coach?"

"I wonder why we can't have the first horses," said Chryssa, — "they were a great deal prettier."

"The first horses are tired," said Mr. Rutherford.

The fresh horses being now put to the coach, the coach came rattling up to the door of the little tavern, and every body got in. And this time there were three men on the back seat, and another man who took his place by Chryssa and Sybil, while his wife sat by Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford. The children did not like this at all, and for a while they sat whispering to each other, and saying how disagreeable it was. But presently Sybil put the edge of her bonnet close to the edge of Chryssa's, and said,

"Chryssa, I don't believe we ought to talk so, — of course the poor man must go somewhere."

"Yes, I s'pose he must," said Chryssa, looking as if she wished the "somewhere" was elsewhere. "But what made you think of that just now?"

"I saw Aunt Esther," whispered Sybil, "getting as close to Uncle Ruth as she could, just to give that woman more room."

"I guess she'd rather sit by Uncle Ruth, though," whispered Chryssa. "But I couldn't squeeze myself up any more, if I tried, Sybil. And I have taken up my basket."

"Well, suppose you were to sit in my lap?" said Sybil.

"O I couldn't!" said Chryssa. "You'd let me fall out of the window."

And then they both laughed.

"What merry little folks we've got here," said the man, looking at them and smiling. "That basket's too heavy for you, child, — shall I hang it up?"

"If you please, sir," said Chryssa. "Only there isn't any place."

"Where there isn't a place, child," said the man, "the way is to make one." And he took from his pocket a strong piece of cord, and tied it to the handle of the basket. Then he tied the other end to a strip of leather at the side of the stage,

and there the basket hung. Chryssa looked up at it with some fear at first, lest it should fall; but though the basket dangled and danced a good deal, it did nothing more.

"It can't fall till the cord breaks," said the man; "and the cord won't break till it's done more work, I guess. That cord came off a package of tenpenny nails, and I've done seventeen things with it. This is the eighteenth."

Chryssa and Sybil both looked up with very astonished little faces, which said, as plainly as faces could, how much they would like to hear about the other seventeen things.

"Wide-awake little folks," said the man, looking towards Mr. Rutherford. "No objection to my telling 'em a story, sir?"

"Not the least," said Mr. Rutherford.

"Well," said the man, "when the nails came home I couldn't untie the knot; and my wife said she could; and I said I'd cut it. So then she said I shouldn't—and just went to work at the knot harder than ever. Of course it came untied—every knot will, if you try the right way and

long enough; and I made the string right up into a bow for my little boy."

"Did he shoot with it?" said Chryssa.

"But then how did you get the string again?" said Sybil.

"I told him he was to shoot into the chip yard, and he shot against the windows; so the string came off as quick as it went on. Then my little girl was sick, and I took the string and played cat's-cradle to amuse her. Then I tied an apple to one end, and set it roasting before the kitchen fire."

"Was the apple for her too?" said Chryssa.

"No, it was for the boy, because I found out that he hadn't heard me tell him to shoot into the chip yard. After that I made a harness for the cat, to amuse them both."

"I shouldn't think the cat would have liked it much," said Chryssa.

"She didn't — so I took it off again. Then I tied two chickens together by the legs, and took 'em over to the minister's donation party; and as it was a pity to come home empty-handed through

the woods, I tied up a bundle of pine knots and brought 'em home for my wife to spin by."

At this point of the story the stage rolled up to the door of one of the little post offices, and there the man and his wife got out. But first he untied Chryssa's basket, and set it down on the seat, and put the twine in his pocket.

"What a funny man!" said Sybil. "I wonder what the other times were."

"But what do you s'pose a chip yard is?" said Chryssa.

"You will see one when we get to Hard Maple," said Mr. Rutherford.

"How far is it now, Uncle Ruth?" said Sybil.

"About four hours," said Mr. Rutherford, looking at his watch.

"Four hours!" said Chryssa.

"Four hours!" repeated Sybil. "Why then we sha'n't get there till after dark."

"I'm afraid not," said her uncle. "Are you very tired?"

"I'm stiff" — said Sybil, twisting herself about.

"Stiff with sitting so long on this leather cushion in one position."

"I'm tired of the post offices," said Chryssa, —
"just a little."

"What do you suppose people did before there were any post offices?" said Mr. Rutherford.

"I don't know," said Sybil. "Weren't there always?"

"There was not such a thing in the world a few centuries ago. The first post office in America was established in 1710."

"Well, how did they do?" said Chryssa, leaning forward from the leather back, and trying not to feel tired.

"Men went round the country on horseback, and carried the letters from house to house. Once a week, or fortnight, or month."

"Then they couldn't get the papers every day," said Sybil.

"There were not many papers to get. People in the country only had them once in a while."

"That must have been very queer," said Chryssa.

"The sun's going down!" said Sybil. "I see him over the top of that hill."

"If there hadn't been any post offices now, we should have got there by this time. I wonder if we've stopped at 'em all."

"Not quite," said Mr. Rutherford smiling, — "here comes another."

"If we were letter bags," said Sybil, "we might get out."

"Or if we were bandboxes," said Chryssa. "The coachman took two bandboxes down from the top."

"Well, you may get out, as it is," said Mr. Rutherford; "and we will try to get some bread and milk, to keep us alive till we get to Hard Maple."

"I guess we shouldn't starve if we didn't," said Chryssa; "but it would taste good, too."

It ought to have tasted good, for the bread was light and white and the milk was sweet and yellow. The children were quite brightened up by their meal; and when the coach was ready, and they went to get in, behold! the two men

had gone off, and there was nobody in the coach but themselves. Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford sat just where they had before, but Chryssa and Sybil got on the back seat and curled themselves up in great comfort. The seat was wide, and the cushions well stuffed; and Mr. Rutherford fastened down the leather side curtains to keep the wind out and the children in. Chryssa and Sybil thought they should do nothing but sit and talk, now that all the strangers were gone and they so comfortable; but presently there was a little silence, and then Chryssa came full tilt against Sybil.

"What *can* you be about!" said Sybil. "If I hadn't been here you might have gone out of the window—at least if the curtain hadn't been down."

"Well I didn't mean to," said Chryssa; "and I don't know how I did it, either."

Sybil sat still and watched her for a minute.

"I can tell you how you did it," she said,—
"now your head's gone off t'other side. Chryssa, you're asleep."

"No I'm not," said Chryssa, opening her eyes, which immediately shut themselves up again.

"Yes you are," said Sybil decidedly. "If your head's going about at *that* rate, Chryssa, you'd better put it down against the cushion so it *can't* go about."

But Chryssa was far too sleepy to do any thing of the kind. Therefore Sybil took hold of her, and pulled her gently down, and pushed her back into the corner of the seat, and put a shawl under her head and another shawl over her. Then she pulled a shawl over herself and went to sleep too.

The coach rolled on as fast as ever, and if the horses thought of sleep they didn't dare to take it, with such a heavy concern at their heels. They trotted on just as steadily as before, and found their way along the dusky road in a most surprising manner. For now it was quite dark; only the stars were bright, and gave a little glimmer of light for people to see by. The night birds fluttered away from the road side into the deeper woods as the stage came near; the farmhouse dogs barked; and the frogs and insects

either hushed their voices amid the rolling of the wheels, or had their song quite smothered and hidden by the noise.

Still the children in the stage coach slept, with heads against the cushions, and eyes fast closed, and hearts dreaming peacefully of flowers and cats; until at length they both woke up together and quite suddenly. They did not know why, but it was because the stage had stopped; and before they could think twice about it, they were lifted carefully out, and set down on their sleepy little feet by the road side. Every thing was very dark and quiet.

“What’s the matter, Uncle Ruth?” said Chryssa, rubbing her eyes.

“Are we there?” asked Sybil.

“Hush!” said Mr. Rutherford softly. “Hear the brook!”

They stood there in the dark road, with the coach wheels dying away in the distance, and the coach itself quite out of sight; with the rustle of unseen leaves overhead, and the song of unseen frogs afar off; and before them, at the other side

of the road, the brook. Rush, rush, it came, pouring along with its full current rippling over the stones, and washing the green leaves that dipped into it — the sweetest of all fresh things. They stood for a moment silently listening, — then turned and walked up to the house.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Chryssa went to bed that night, she thought she should certainly wake up long before light next morning, and be up and dressed ready for the light when it did come. But instead of that she lay sleeping, sleeping, and never opened her eyes once until the sun himself looked in at her window, to see what she could possibly be about. How she jumped up then!—and clambered over Sybil, and got down to the floor, and ran away to the window to look out! Yes, it was time for her to be up then. The green meadow had not come out of its bath of dew-drops, and every blade of grass glistened and shone in the cool drops of water. The trees swung about in the morning wind, as if they were exercising gently before breakfast, and the little brook was rushing on its way as usual,—Chryssa could hear it though it was out of sight. There was a splashing of water quite near her window too, and when





she had looked about for a little while, she saw a tiny clear stream of water pouring out of a brown trough, and spattering away on the boards beneath. A young larch tree stood near the trough, and its waving leaves looked like soft green feathers.

A little further off was a brown hen-house, from which the hens came, one by one, through a little door — hens and chickens and cocks. Some of them immediately began to look for grasshoppers in the wet grass, and others jumped up on the brown trough and dipped their bills in the little clear stream as it came flowing through. Then Chryssa saw that there were several troughs leading one into another, first on this side of the fence, then beyond. She also felt quite sure that she heard a little pig squealing somewhere, but where she could not see. At the back of the meadow rose up a green hill, speckled with gray rocks and stretching back to the forest; and over the forest trees the sun showed his bright face very plainly. And on the green hill there were ever so many white spots — and the spots moved about, — that was the strangest thing of all.

“O Sybil!” cried Chryssa, “do come and see what these white spots are, — they’re moving about, and they’re eating, and they’re running — they must be sheep! — Sybil!”

Sybil jumped out of bed too, at that, and came and knelt down at the window to watch the sheep; but Chryssa did not stay there much longer, for now she wanted to be dressed and out of doors. Shoes and stockings went on at the quickest rate, and so did every thing else that could be done quick and well; and then she went out into the hall, and with her little hand clasping the balustrade, she went down the wide stairs one at a time.

Up the stairs to meet her came a sweet, fresh breath of the summer wind, telling of the dewy grass and blooming flowers it had blown over, and the sunbeams it had met on its way: it even repeated the song of two or three birds; and when it blew in Chryssa’s face, and pushed back her hair, she wondered how it got into the house. But when she came to the turn of the stairs, so that she could look down to the front door, she

saw that it was wide open; so of course the wind got in there; and of course when Chryssa got to the door herself, there she stood still and looked out.

It was a very plain, old-fashioned door, painted white, and with a very black knocker in the shape of a lady's face. But now the door stood quietly back in the hall, as if quite sure that nobody would want to knock at that time in the morning; and the wind swept in and out just as it chose, without asking leave. Outside was a little porch, painted white like the door, with a seat at each end and steps in front; and outside of the porch were two great trees. They were so big that Chryssa could only see their brown trunks at first, till she went out in the porch and looked up; and then she saw that the trees spread out their great branches over the house and far off on each side; and mixed up their green leaves together so that it was impossible to tell which was which. There was a deep shade under the trees at midday, but now the sun sent his rays in under the branches, and made long yellow streaks on

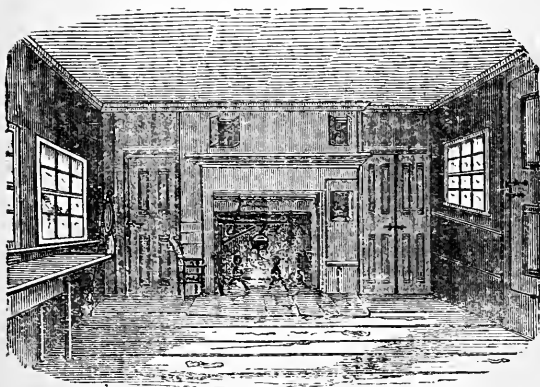
the green grass. Even the brown fence at the foot of the grass was touched, and the brook—yes, there was the brook! at the other side of the road. It came running out from under another fence, sparkling in the sun, foaming up against every large stone and rippling over the little ones with the freshest of all sweet voices. A little red and white calf was eating in the field whence the brook came, and a black calf was frisking about instead of eating. Under one of the great elm trees, too, Chryssa presently saw a cat,—a pretty tortoise-shell cat, not eating nor frisking, but watching,—looking up into the tree as if her breakfast was there, and she was thinking how to get it. Then a grey hen came stalking along through the wet grass, keeping a sharp lookout for grasshoppers.

“Chickie! chickie!” said Chryssa.

“Cor-r-r-r!” said the hen, turning her head so that one little bright eye could see Chryssa the better.

“Poor chickie!” said Chryssa, coming forward a step and holding out her hand. But the hen

seemed to think *that* was quite too much ; and she ran off as fast as she could, to a white cock that sat on the fence and crowed half the time. Puss had disappeared too, now, and Chryssa turned about and went back into the house. The first room she opened had nobody in it ; so she crossed that to the big kitchen which lay beyond, and putting her little fingers on the iron latch, pulled it up and opened the door.



There were people enough here, and busy enough, too. Great sticks of wood blazed up the chimney, as if they meant to burn up the tea kettle instead of making it boil ; and several pans of

biscuit stood on the hearth with a clean towel over them, ready to bake for breakfast. Miss Flint was at the table moulding out more biscuits, and Mr. Ruthven sat in his arm chair in the chimney corner. He was looking gravely at the fire when Chryssa came in, but he turned round at once and smiled upon her.

"Well, little dear!" he said, — "up already?"

"O yes," said Chryssa, as she came and stood by his knee; "I've been up some time. I've been looking out of the door. Do you always sit by the fire, grandpa?"

"Why it's cold enough for a fire to-day," said her grandfather; "don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Chryssa, "it's quite cold at the door." And she shivered a little, and then smiled, for Mr. Ruthven took both her hands and began to rub them in his.

"Cold enough!" he said. "What were you about at the door?"

"O, I was looking at the chickens, and the brook — and every thing," said Chryssa, gazing into the bright fire.

"I think I'll let you feed the chickens and fetch in the eggs while you're here," said Mr. Ruthven. "Don't you like to be useful?"

"O yes!" said Chryssa. "And I like to get eggs. I saw a cat out there under the tree,—a tortoise-shell cat."

"Yes, that's the old cat," said her grandfather. "She's got a dozen kittens, more or less, down at the barn."

Oh! a dozen kittens!" said Chryssa.

"Real pretty ones, too," said Miss Flint, as she rolled out her biscuit. "One of 'em's as spotted as a little pig."

"May I play with 'em all?" said Chryssa.

"Why, you can't catch a kitten of them!" said Mr. Ruthven laughing. "They're just as wild as hawks."

"Every one of them?" said Chryssa, looking dismayed.

"Every one of them, deary. They all stay out at the barn, and it's as much as I can do to get sight of 'em."

"Maybe I could catch them," said Chryssa thoughtfully. "May I try?"

“To be sure!” said Mr. Ruthven; “you may do just what you’ve a mind to, with every cat about the place. But the old tortoise-shell is the only one good for any thing.”

“O I’m sure I shall like ’em all,” said Chryssa.

“Well,” said Mr. Ruthven smiling, “they’re all yours. But we’ve got something else worth all the cats that ever were heard of. See here—you go into this pantry, and look about for two big stone jars, and then take the covers off and look in.”

So he put his hand back and opened the pantry door for her, (it was just by his chair) and Chryssa went in.

The pantry was long and not very wide, with shelves all round two sides of it and part of the third; and in the midst of the shelves a window. The window was open, and Chryssa could hear the pattering of the little stream upon the brown boards down by the larch tree. The pantry floor was painted a bright yellow, and so were the shelves; and while some of the shelves were loaded with great earthen pans of milk, others held

nothing but cheeses,—cheese after cheese stood there; some deep yellow, looking hard and old, and others creamy and soft and new. On the floor under the shelf by the window stood two great stone jars, and by them two equally large stone jugs. Chryssa lifted the heavy cover of the first jar and peeped in: it was full of great cakes of maple sugar, each almost as large round as the jar itself; and the second jar was just as full, of the same sweet things. Then Chryssa covered them up again and came out.

“Well,” said Mr. Ruthven, putting his arm round her and lifting her up on his lap, “what did you see? What did the jars have in them?”

“I *guess* it’s maple sugar,” said Chryssa smiling.

“I guess so too! And what do you think is in the jugs alongside of them?”

“I don’t know,” said Chryssa,—“I didn’t look in.”

“Well you couldn’t have seen much if you had looked in,” said her grandfather; “but the jugs are full of maple molasses. And whenever you want any thing out of either of ’em, just go and take it.”

Chryssa smiled, but to say truth, she loved kittens so much better than maple molasses, that she began to think of them again directly.

Then the outer door opened, and two men came in with great wooden pails full of milk; and the milk was covered with thick white froth, and looked quite delicious. And Miss Flint, having finished her biscuit, went into the pantry to strain the milk, and Chryssa sat still on her grandfather's lap and looked at the fire; while he stroked her hair and looked at her, and Chryssa thought his blue eyes were the most beautiful things she had ever seen.

It was a great matter after breakfast to know what to do first, and Chryssa sat thinking about it, even before she had finished her last piece of bread and butter.

"Shall we go right down to the brook the first thing?" she whispered to Sybil as they left the breakfast table.

But Sybil replied with a great deal of importance, —

"You can, if you like, Chryssa; but *I've* got

to help Aunt Esther unpack things and put 'em away."

So while Sybil went off up stairs, the gentlemen sat down to talk; and Chryssa after looking at them once or twice, opened the door softly and went out into the hall. The front door was open still, and the wind came in as sweetly as ever; and Chryssa went into the porch, and then tripped down the porch steps, keeping carefully out of the way of a large brown and black caterpillar that was taking a very brisk walk indeed.

She looked down at the brook, and up at the trees, and then at a little path which ran round the house,—so she ran after it. It went quite round to a little white gate at the back of the house; and at the gate Chryssa stood a long time, looking about; every thing was so new and strange.

There were pretty little tufts of grass growing about the gate posts and the white fence, and even a tuft of clover now and then, or a head of buttercups; but beyond the gate there was nothing but chips. Chips in every variety,—large chips with the bark on, and little chips with the bark

off, and pieces of bark by themselves, and splinters of wood by themselves; all mixed and mingled and lying upon other chips and pieces of bark. Several large logs lay there too, crushing down the chips; and other sticks, smaller and longer, — and a bright axe leaning against one of the logs, near a pile of wood that was ready cut and split for the kitchen fire. At one side ran another little white fence, and two plum trees looked over it and said there was the garden, and a pea-vine peeped through and said it didn't care; while at the other side three or four large apple trees rose up out of the midst of the chips, and were covered with sweet blossoms. There the chips ended their possession, and the ground sloped down a steep little green bank into a broad green meadow.

Just opposite Chryssa, between the apple trees and the garden fence, but further off than either, was a great barn; and on one side of it another long barn or outhouse; both looking as brown and dingy as they could. Further still, Chryssa could see trees and rocks, and a green side hill, and fences, and tufts of bushes.

"What a pretty place!" thought Chryssa, "and how sweet the chips smell — and O, what a beautiful piece of white bark!" So she stepped forward among the chips to pick it up.

It was smooth and soft, and of a pretty white color, with little streaks of dark brown, and it had a sweet, pleasant smell. Chryssa stood rubbing it gently in her hands, and smelling it, when suddenly she saw something stirring behind the garden fence; and the old tortoise-shell cat climbed up to the very top and stood there for a minute. She looked at Chryssa, and she looked at the weather, and she looked at a pretty swallow that was flying about overhead; and then she jumped down from the fence and walked softly across the chips to the barn. Then a hen which was in the barn began to cackle as loud as she could, and Chryssa felt quite distracted.

"They're all down at the barn!" she said to herself, — "I wonder if I mayn't go there too."

"Well Chryssie," said Mr. Rutherford's voice behind her, "have you found the chip yard?"

"O yes, Uncle Ruth!" — and Chryssa turned

round with a very earnest, excited little face, —
“isn't it beautiful! And the old cat's gone down
to the barn.”

“Has she?” said Mr. Rutherford; “then I suppose the kitten wants to go too.”

“O I guess the kittens are there now,” said Chryssa smiling. “But I'd like to go, very much.”

“Off with you, then,” said her uncle, “as fast as you like. But don't go any further than the barn, alone.”

“O no,” said Chryssa, “I guess I shan't want to go any farther in a great while.”

And away she went, stepping along over the pieces of bark in her way, and looking at every one of them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE chip yard was on the top of a little hill, and the barns stood at the foot ; and from the second story — or, as the people called it, the upper floor of the big barn — a flat, straight bridge of boards came over to the chip yard. Chryssa thought at first that she would go across the bridge and in at the big barn door ; but the door looked large and heavy, and the great wooden latch was not only far above Chryssa's head, but was also much too large for her fingers to lift, if they could have reached it. So she followed the road down the hill.

There the garden fence came to a sharp corner, and a little settlement of milkweeds enjoyed all the ground between the fence and the road. On the other side Chryssa could look right under the bridge, and see the trees blowing about and the long grass waving in the meadow : straight in front of her was a row of little barns and sheds,

with an open door in the middle. Chryssa went on at once, and looked in. The barnyard lay there, beyond the shed, and beyond the barnyard were more green meadows and great trees. In the shed where she stood was a little green wagon, an old red sleigh, and an ox-cart; and about the ground were scattered feathers, here and there one. Very pretty feathers—white and grey and red.

“Well!” said Chryssa.—“But I wonder where the cat is?”

So she went in a little further—then she stepped back and looked up the road to where Mr. Rutherford stood in the chip yard,—then she went through the shed and into the barnyard. There were barns and sheds on every side of it but one; with open windows into the hay lofts, and straw scattered about, and milking stools in the corner. Under one of the sheds was a long row of mangers, and when Chryssa went over there and looked in, she found one manger half full of hay, and in the hay a pretty black hen on her nest. Her comb was very red, and her eyes were very

bright, and she and Chryssa looked at each other for some time without speaking.

Suddenly Sybil came running up to the barn-yard fence on the other side, calling out, "Chryssa! Chryssa!"

"I'm here," said Chryssa.

"O there you are!" said Sybil,—"come quick—crawl under the bars, Chryssie, you're so little,—they're going to feed the sheep. Don't you want to go?"

"O yes!" said Chryssa; and she crawled under the bars (she was so little) and ran along with Sybil to another fence at the side of the barn. Beyond this fence was a steep hillside, sprinkled with apple trees; and low down on the hillside, near the fence, there were many large flat rocks.

"But I don't see the sheep," said Chryssa.

"Hush!" said Sybil,—"they're somewhere, I s'pose,—grandpa's going to feed them."

At that moment Mr. Ruthven came down the hill from the chip yard, and in his hand was a little rusty tin pan full of coarse salt. He stood there by the fence and began to call,—

“Canan! canan! canan-nan-nan!” and Chryssa was certain that she heard a sheep say, “Ba-a-a!” in reply,—yet she could not see one any where.

“They’re up in the woods,” said Mr. Ruthven, getting over the bars, while Sybil and Chryssa crept under as before. “Canan! canan! canan!”

“Ba-a-a!” said another meek little voice on the brow of the hill; and Chryssa looked up and saw a white sheep standing all by itself at the very edge of the woods. Then another sheep appeared, and another, and then two more at the other side of the hill; and when Mr. Ruthven called them once more, and shook the pan, and began to pour out the salt on some of the flat rocks—scattering it by handfuls—the sheep came running down the hill in long lines, on the little sheep paths. They crowded upon the rocks where the salt was, till each rock looked like a mere little flock of sheep; and sometimes two or three sheep were fairly crowded off, and jumped down and ran to another rock. Chryssa could hear their little feet tramp, tramp over the rocks; and now and

then there was a little low bleat of pleasure and enjoyment. Overhead the great apple trees swung their branches softly about, and shook off their pink flowers upon the grass—which was spotted with dandelions besides; and the sheep kept watch of Sybil and Chryssa, and ran off very fast if they moved away from the fence, but they were not afraid of Mr. Ruthven at all. Then when they had licked up all the salt, they began to scatter over the hillside again, and to run off to the woods.

“Grandpa,” said Chryssa, “why is that one sheep black, and all the rest white?”

“Why, dearie,” said Mr. Ruthven, “he has a black coat on—that’s all I can tell you about it. There’s one black sheep in almost every flock.”

“That’s very funny!” said Sybil. “They ought to be half black and half white.”

“No, no,” said Mr. Ruthven, “I like the white ones best.”

“O so do I,” said Chryssa, “a great deal!”

“How they love the salt!” said Sybil, looking at a rock where one sheep stood all by himself, licking up any salt that might yet stick to it.

"But maybe that poor sheep didn't have any before," said Chryssa.

"Grandpa," said Sybil, "when I came down here a little while ago, I thought I saw in one of those big trees by the barn something that looked just like a very little lamb."

"O!" — said Chryssa. "But how could a lamb get up in a tree?"

"It was a dead lamb," said Sybil. "At least it looked like that."

"I dare say it was that," said Mr. Ruthven. "When a lamb dies, the men often put it up in a tree; because if they left it on the ground the old sheep would stand and mourn over it, until perhaps she died herself. See, there's another in that tree."

The children looked up at the tree, and then at him and then at each other, but they did not speak a word; and as their grandfather went slowly up one of the little sheep paths towards the woods they walked behind him, and did not even stoop to pick a dandelion.

It was very sweet on the hillside. Besides

the apple blossoms—which were perfume enough to bewitch any body—the little pennyroyal started up every where under foot, and made the whole air spicy. The apple trees went no further than the brow of the hill, and beyond there was just the short grass, and grey rocks, and pennyroyal, with the white sheep sprinkled every where, till you came to the edge of the woods.

“Sybil,” whispered Chryssa, “I guess that’s just what Aunt Esther would do if one of us died.”

But Sybil shook her head.

“She might want to—I don’t believe she would. She’d say it wasn’t right, Chryssie—if Jesus had taken us.”

“How would she know?” said Chryssa, in the same whisper.

“She’d believe he had,” Sybil answered softly, when she had thought for a minute.

“Couldn’t she be *sure*?” said Chryssa.

“If we were *very* good children, I s’pose she could,” said Sybil.

And Chryssa thought so much about that, she never noticed the pennyroyal again for full five minutes.

"I'm going too far for you to-day, little dears," said Mr. Ruthven, turning round towards the children. "Can you find your way back to the house?"

"O yes," said Sybil. "May we go home through the meadow, grandpa?"

"Any where you like, dearie — only don't fall into the spring."

"O no," said Sybil again; "we'll take care." And holding out her hand to Chryssa, they went skipping down the hill together, singing as they went, —

"O," said the little blades of grass,

Growing up;

"O how the spring hours pass,

Buttercup!

Winds come and whistle,

And birds come and sing,

And the early time of life

Is a very sunny thing!"

"Yes," said the buttercup, and bowed

Very low;

"And joy cometh also from a cloud,

As you know:

Soft April showers,

And sweet drops of rain,

How they make our faces shine

When the sun comes out again!

"I," said the buttercup, "have cheeks
Bright as gold;
They hide in a little bud for weeks,
Then unfold.
Spring bade me hasten,
Sunbeams said, 'Appear!'
And therefore came I forth
At this early time of year."

Then said the little grass, "And we
Were called too;
The earth said, 'Make a carpet for me,
Fresh and new.'
Cows asked for pasture,
And sheep went to look,
And we gave them first a taste
In the meadow by the brook."

The side of the hill was strewn with rocks and stones, round which the green grass and the yellow buttercups and the white daisies grew and flourished. Little tufts of clover showed themselves here and there, and a tall beech tree rose up at the foot. But before the children got to the foot of the hill the ground got wet.

"O Sybil!" cried Chryssa, "it's just as wet as it can be!"

"Well stand on the stones, then," said Sybil, "till I go and see which is the best way."

It didn't look wet, — the grass grew green and

fair between the gray stones ; but when Sybil put her foot down on one spot of the grass, a loud splash ! said there was water there too.

“ Well ! ” said Sybil, as she drew back her foot, “ it’s good my shoes are thick ! ”

“ But you might go over shoe, ” suggested Chryssa.

“ Indeed I might, ” said Sybil. “ I guess I’ll just keep on the stones. ”

So stepping from one gray stone to another, Sybil went carefully on, till she came to where two or three large moss-covered rocks stood up in a circle near together. There she stopped and cried out with delight,

“ O Chryssa ! come here ! I never saw any thing so pretty in all my life. ”

With all haste and care Chryssa came on ; trying with her toe the treacherous green spots, to know whether they were grass or grass and water ; and then with much trouble stretching her little foot across, to some stone that lay at a most uncomfortable distance. But when at last she stood side by side with Sybil, she did not cry out,

but was perfectly silent with delight and admiration.

The great rocks, now close at hand, seemed higher than ever, and were nearly up to Chryssa's head; and between them lay a little pool of bright water. It seemed to bubble up from the ground at one side, and at the other ran out in a little stream towards the house. Great patches of olive-green moss half clothed the rocks, even under the water; and a few little fresh green leaves of some water plant grew at the very bottom of the pool.

"Here," said Sybil, after a few minutes' silence, "here, Chryssa, we can come and sail boats!"

Chryssa looked all admiration, but before she had time to inquire where the boats were to come from, Sybil went on to explain her plan.

"We can get flat chips and bits of bark from the chip yard, first," she said, "and so by degrees we can learn to make real boats. I don't believe you can, Chryssa, because you're so little, but I think I could."

"O yes, I'm sure you could," said Chryssa,

whose ideas of Sybil's power were quite unlimited.

"And I can pick up the chips."

"Yes, that would be a very good way," said Sybil; "and we'll begin right after dinner."

But as they walked home, Chryssa saw the tail of the old tortoise-shell cat just disappearing under the barn; so it must be confessed that all dinner time she thought more of the kittens than of the boats.

- 22 April. '06

CHAPTER V.

GRANDPA," said Sybil after dinner, "may I have your old knife for a little while?"

"Yes, dearie," he answered — "you may have any thing you want. But don't cut your fingers."

So Sybil took the old knife (which indeed was not *too* sure to cut any thing) and went forth to the chip yard, followed by Chryssa.

The afternoon sun was shining warm and soft on the meadow, streaming through the old apple trees, and lying in clear yellow bars upon the chip yard; and the old logs lay scattered about, as still and rough as ever. The apple trees were full of blossoms, and every little while the wind shook off some of the sweet things, and sent them fluttering to the ground. Far down in the meadow a flock of ducklings waddled along after their mother to the brook; while in the chip yard, an old speckled hen (well satisfied to have her brood on dry land) scratched about among the chips,

and found ants and grubs for a dozen downy chickens.

On one of the logs sat Sybil with her knife, and Chryssa with chips enough for a whole fleet of boats. They looked now and then at the tree by the barn, in which was the skeleton of the little lamb, and it would have made them feel sorry, only that nothing could just then—they were too glad. Once when they looked up into the tree just over their heads, it was full of robins,—their red breasts making quite a show in the sunlight; and a phœbe who was building her nest in the cow-shed, came out and sang for them several times. There were bluebirds about too, and every cock on the farm crowed about once in ten minutes, lest people should forget his existence. Across the road, men were ploughing the field next the brook meadow, shouting out their orders to the oxen in a way that made the children laugh every time. Little butterflies flitted about the few tufts of clover that grew in the chip yard, and grasshoppers jumped about in the spryest manner possible.

"Do you think that will sail?" said Chryssa, when she had watched for some time the chip which Sybil was shaping with the dull knife.

"It will float," said Sybil, bringing the little boat's prow to a point with great expense of strength.

"But will it go about from one place to another?" asked Chryssa.

"Why yes," said Sybil, "for I shall take a long stick and push it."

"O!"—said Chryssa, as if a great weight was taken off her mind; "how nice that will be! When shall we begin?"

"Well I don't care if we go now," said Sybil; "I'm about tired cutting. I've got two done, you see,—that'll do to begin with. The masts don't stand up very straight, but no matter."

And taking up the two little boats, Sybil led the way to the little spring with its shore of high rocks. The water looked stiller and clearer than ever, in the afternoon light, and the moss at the bottom was like a velvet carpet.

"Now, Chryssie," said Sybil, "we must name

our boats, — it would be very inconvenient to keep saying ‘your boat’ and ‘my boat’ — they must have names. I shall call mine The Dolphin.”

“What for?” said Chryssa.

“That’s a fish, you know, and fish live in the water. If I were you I would call t’other one The Carp.”

“Well, what is a carp?” said Chryssa.

“Why, it’s another fish,” said Sybil. “When the fair one with the golden locks was on her journey, a carp raised up its head and talked to her. Carps do a great many things in fairy tales.”

“O I remember that story,” said Chryssa; “at least I remember your telling it to me.”

The Carp and the Dolphin were carefully put in the water, where instead of diving, after the usual manner of fish, they really floated, — much to the satisfaction of their little owners. What if the mast of the Dolphin did lean forward, while that of the Carp inclined very much to one side? — the tiny craft did not capsize, although loaded with two or three small stones

apiece; but went gently from end to end of the little lake, pushed on by a long stick. Fair were their shadows in the water, — fairer still the reflected heads of the two children, showing side by side with the moss-covered rocks. The soft wind brushed their hair in every direction, but they knew it not, — they were completely happy. Then when the boats reached their mossy harbour between the rocks, the load of stones was taken off, and a snail-shell and bits of penny-royal laid on instead.

“How funny that looks!” said Chryssa. “I wonder what sort of things people put in real ships?”

“O they put all sorts of things,” said Sybil: “sugar, and tea, and coffee — and velvet, and lace, and mahogany, and people.”

“Well, we can’t put any people in ours,” said Chryssa, “they’re too small.”

“We could have small people,” said Sybil. “I could cut out some card-babies — little boys and men for the sailors, and women and girls for the passengers.”

“But then if they got wet” — said Chryssa, —
“what would become of them then?”

“O then they’d be drowned, like other people,” said Sybil, — which was a most satisfactory conclusion.

Meanwhile tea had been getting ready, for the real people who were safe in the house, removed from all perils of shipwreck, and when Miss Flint had covered the table with bread and butter and milk, and cold ham and cheese and radishes and cake and blackberry jam, she thought she would go and find the children before she called any one else to tea; for Miss Flint’s heart was much softer than her name. She soon found where they were, and came up quite close to them before they saw her, for neither Sybil nor Chryssa could look at any thing but their boats for a moment. So there is no telling how long Miss Flint might have stood there unnoticed, if she had not spied the Dolphin and Carp sailing about among the shadows of the rocks and the children’s heads in the water.

“Well, I *should* like to know what you’re doing!” she said.

"Why we're sailing boats!" said both the young ones, in a tone of full complacency.

"Boats! I want to know if you call them boats?" said Miss Flint.

Sybil looked up very quick, and then down again, but she did not speak, for she was afraid she should say too much: to be sure, the boats *were* pretty rough, but she had made them, and did not care to have them laughed at.

Chryssa looked up too, but her childish eyes went back to the Dolphin and Carp with new admiration, as she said,

"O they sail *beautifully*, Miss Flint!"

"Well now," said Miss Flint, relenting a little, "why don't you get Aaron to make you some real boats? He'll whittle 'em out till they look like a picture."

"Who is Aaron?" said Chryssa.

"Why, he's one of your grandpa's men, child—wears all the red hair he can get on his face. You tell him to make you some boats."

"I suppose Uncle Ruth would make us some," said Sybil, a little doubtful of asking favors of Aaron.

“Well, just as you like — it’s nothing to me, I’m sure,” said Miss Flint. “But I’ll tell you what is, and that’s tea. So come along as fast as you can,—the sun’s most down, and there’s the milk.”

And Miss Flint crossed the little field with great steps, while the children, having laid their long sticks side by side near the rocks, took up the Dolphin and Carp and came after. And as they crossed the chip yard there came a man up the road from the brook meadow, wearing a very red beard, and carrying two yellow wooden pails of white milk. Then Chryssa whispered to Sybil that she thought that must be Aaron,—to which Sybil replied,

“Very likely.”

CHAPTER VI.

“**C**HRYSSA,” said Mrs. Rutherford after breakfast next day, “if you want to be useful you may take that little tin pail and go down to the brook and get it full of water for me.”

“Why don’t you have some from the spout, Aunt Esther?” said Sybil.

“That is hard water, and the brook water is soft. Don’t go unless you want to, Chryssa. I thought you would like it.”

“O I do like it dearly,” said Chryssa. But I thought all water was soft—I’m sure it *feels* soft.” And she took up the little tin pail, and half danced, half walked down the little path which led to the road, till she came to the gate. The fastening of the gate was pretty high, but she reached it, opened the gate, crossed the road, and stood at the edge of the brook.

When Chryssa first set out from the house, she thought she could just as well get two pails of

water as one, but now she began to fear that one would be more than she could manage. The brook was not deep, she could see every stone and pebble at the bottom; but it rushed out from under the fence, and foamed and tumbled along in a way that was noisy at least; and Chryssa was afraid it would run off with her pail if she gave it the smallest chance. The rushes and flowers and grass at the edge of the water, bent down and dipped their heads in, and the brook caught them and swept them along as if it would fain carry them off altogether, but they were too fast at the root. Now and then a chip came sailing down under the fence, and from the side of a great stone the little trout and dace danced in and out from shadow to sunshine. Chryssa stood and looked—then she stooped down and touched the side of her pail to the water. But O, how strong the water was! how much stronger than Chryssa's little hand! It was all she could do to keep the pail still, and the brook foamed and bubbled up around it, and seemed to say, "I'll have you presently!"—and the brook spoke

true. For when Chryssa took the pail up, and then softly dipped it down so that the water could go in—the water went at it with a rush,—away sailed the pail, and the brook danced and laughed to think of Chryssa's trying to get some of its bright water. But Chryssa did not laugh; she stood and looked at the pail very soberly.

It could not go far—that was one comfort, for the brook soon turned off under another bit of the fence into the next meadow; and as the sticks of the fence were low down, they caught the runaway pail and held it fast. But it was further off from Chryssa than ever,—so the next thing Sybil and Mrs. Rutherford saw, was Chryssa herself at the front door—but without her pail.

“Where's the tin pail?” said Sybil.

“Why, it's in the brook,” said Chryssa; “because when I dipped it down, the brook got it away from me. But it's safe.”

“Well how do you like getting pails of water?” said Sybil, laughing.

“I like it very much,” said Chryssa. “Only I wish I had the pail.”

Sybil ran down the path, and Chryssa after her, and Mrs. Rutherford went too, and with a long stick soon hooked up the tin pail out of the water and then filled it; but Chryssa would let no one but herself carry it up to the house.

"Where does the brook come from, Aunt Esther?" she said, as she set down the pail on the kitchen floor and brushed a few wet drops from her apron.

"It comes from a great lake," said Mrs. Rutherford. "Some day I'll take you up to see it."

"Some day," said Chryssa, — "well, I guess I'll go now and see if I can find the kittens."

The old barn where the kittens lived, stood at the edge of a little hill, so that while the lower floor opened upon the barnyard on the meadow level, the upper floor was as high as the top of the hill; and from the upper door to the hill there was a wooden bridge. The barn itself was built upon separate piles of stones, instead of a stone wall, which left a free passage under it for any thing that was not very big. Under there the hens sometimes made their nests, there the

kittens lived when they were at home, and Chryssa herself might have gone under to look for them; but she thought that would frighten them too much. Therefore she placed herself under the wooden bridge and peeped round the corner; for it was very desirable to get sight of the kittens, and find out how many there were, and how large, and what were their colours, before she tried to catch one. The kittens, however, did not seem to approve of her plan, or else it was their time for taking a nap, for not one could she see. She stood there in the shade of the wooden bridge (much to the astonishment and discomposure of two phœbes who were building under the timbers) and watched and waited, but to no purpose. Sometimes she thought she would go and look under, between the stone piers, but then if the kittens should be on their way out, and should see her, and be frightened, there would be no telling when she might get sight of them again: at the same time, it *was* very tiresome to stand so carefully and so still under the bridge.

The sheep were feeding quietly on the hillside,

and every now and then Chryssa could hear a hen cackle and fly up in the hay to her nest, or another one cackle and fly down; while the two phœbes, having at last got used to her as one of the necessary evils of life, went on with their building and forgot her. Softly the warm breeze came down the little hill and waved the blades of grass and the daisies; slowly the shadow of the wooden bridge stretched away eastward as the afternoon sun crept under it, and very softly Chryssa sighed to herself and wished the kittens would come.

At last she saw — not the kittens, but the old cat, who came walking down the hill from the chip yard with a large mouse in her mouth; and as she came on she called to her kittens with a very muffled sort of mew, because of the mouse in her mouth. Then Chryssa heard presently ever so many of the prettiest little mews that could be, not muffled a bit, but clear and bright; and soon a little white pair of ears stuck themselves out from under the barn, and then a gray head, and then she saw the whisk of a little black tail.

At last as the old cat got very near, five little kittens came prancing out, and one of them was as white as milk!

If any body could have seen Chryssa's face then, the sight would have been almost as good as that of the kittens, for her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes sparkled, and she hardly dared to breathe lest the kittens should hear her. How they tumbled about the old cat! and played with her tail, and turned somersets in the green grass! while old Puss herself marched steadily on, mouse in mouth, till she reached the barn, walked right under it—and in a second every kitten had vanished! Then Chryssa did go down and look under too, but she could not see in which corner they were.

“Well,” she thought to herself, “I think I’ve seen enough for one day!”—though it was perfectly true that she wanted very much to see more.


So after she had watched the kittens in this way for a while, going to the barn very regularly every day, Chryssa began to wonder whether she

could not make believe that she was the old cat, and so make the kittens come out to see her. And one morning when old Mrs. Tortoiseshell was eating a late breakfast in the kitchen, Chryssa went softly out and ran down to the barn. There she crouched down close to the corner of the wall and began to call the kittens, as near like the old cat as she could; twisting her little mouth into all sorts of endeavours to say "Ma-ow" properly. And either the kittens knew very little of the world, or else Chryssa was something of a cat herself; for the first thing she knew a black kitten stuck its head out from under the barn, and said "mew!" in a very small voice indeed. How delighted Chryssa was! even though the little black head went in again as quick as it had come out. How she laughed to herself! Again and again she repeated the call, and soon the white kitten looked out, and then the yellow one. Chryssa kept perfectly still, and once when there were no heads visible she stretched out her hand and held it just over the place where they should appear. Then when the white kitten peeped cau-

tiously out, Chryssa's hand slid softly down till it almost reached the soft white neck of the unsuspecting kitten. Almost,—but just as she thought her prize sure, kitty looked up, and seeing Chryssa she dashed back in a great hurry; and neither white nor black would come out again that day. Not even when Mrs. Tortoiseshell came walking down the hill, and mewed in her own proper person, could Chryssa see even a whisker of one of the young ones.

But this became her regular amusement; and whoever went to seek her if she was off by herself, was pretty sure to find her by the old barn wall, making vain attempts to catch the kittens. Sometimes her hand would just touch the soft ear or the long tail of some little puss, but catch them she never did; they were always too quick for her. Neither did she ever get tired watching,—not even Mrs. Tortoiseshell herself thought the kittens better worth time and attention.

CHAPTER VII.

 ONE day a swallow fell down the chimney. Which was not his fault, but his mother's. For when Mrs. Swallow chose to build her nest in a chimney instead of a tree, and to build it moreover of glue and sticks, she might have known that a good heavy rain would perhaps soften the glue and make it fall to pieces. Also when she made her nest very shallow instead of very deep, she might have known that such hare-brained things as young swallows would perhaps climb up to the edge and fall over.

I don't know which way the misfortune happened, — but one morning when Chryssa came down stairs, there lay a young swallow on the hearth in the parlour. He was a very ugly youngster, and did not resemble his mother in the least; for whereas she had bright eyes, and blue-black plumage, swift wings and a long forked tail; *he* could plume himself upon nothing, had neither

wings nor tail, and even his eyes were shut up tight. A large mouth he had,—and the minute Chryssa touched him he opened it as wide as he could, which startled her very much. Even she could not say he was pretty, but she felt very sorry for him, nevertheless. So—partly because Chryssa pitied him, partly because she pitied him herself—Mrs. Rutherford got a little basket and put some cotton in it, and laid the swallow on the cotton and covered him up. And for a while he was quiet, but then he began to scream every few minutes, in a way that went through Chryssa's head and her heart too.

“What *can* make him do so?” she said.

“Why he's hungry, that's all,” said Miss Flint. “If he'd been in the nest all this time, he'd have eaten a dozen flies, more or less.”

“A dozen flies!” cried Chryssa.

“Why yes, to be sure,” said Miss Flint. “What do you s'pose swallows live on?”

And stepping up to the kitchen window Miss Flint caught a fly, walked up to the basket and uncovered the swallow. Then she touched his

little bill with the fly, and the moment the swallow felt it—or smelt it—he threw back his head and opened his mouth, and Miss Flint dropped the fly right down his throat. Whereupon he shut up his mouth again.

“Can’t we feed him with any thing else?” said Chryssa, who was much interested in the whole proceeding, but felt quite sure *she* could never catch flies for him.

“Yes, you can give him worms if you’ve a mind,” said Miss Flint. And she caught another fly, which he swallowed in like manner, and then she gave him a drop of water from the end of her finger.

“But won’t he eat bread?” said Chryssa. To which Miss Flint replied, that he wouldn’t eat it—if it was cake.

“But why?” said Chryssa.

“Because he isn’t a sparrow, child.”

“I wish he was a sparrow,” said Chryssa, looking at the swallow with some disapprobation.

“If he was he wouldn’t have fallen down chimney,” said Miss Flint.

"Why not?" said Chryssa.

"Why he wouldn't have been up there to fall down," said Miss Flint laughing.

"O" — said Chryssa, — "that's what you mean. Well, I wish he *could* eat bread! Because we've *got* to keep him and feed him till he gets to be a big swallow."

"I guess you won't have to keep him long," said Miss Flint, — "he may want something else. Perhaps too many flies won't agree with him, and his health may require caterpillars."

"Well, we can try," said Chryssa, looking at the little bird and thinking what a pity it was he was not prettier, and what a dreadful thing it must be to take caterpillars for medicine.

"All young birds are just as ugly, Chryssie," said her aunt smiling, — "none of them have any feathers at first."

Whether the flies agreed with the swallow or not, he agreed with them, — there was no end to his appetite; and if he was neglected for a little while, he would give such piercing screams that any body was glad to catch flies to stop his

mouth. Then his basket must be hung up out of the way of the cat, and must be taken up stairs at night; and sometimes in the night itself he would scream out,—and Mrs. Rutherford told Chryssa that perhaps he heard his mother twittering in the chimney. For in the bright moonlight nights the old swallows flew up and down, bringing food to their hungry young ones that were still in the nest. But on the whole, Master Swallow in the basket was a good deal of trouble, and every body wished something about him. Chryssa wished he would grow up and get his feathers, but several people wished he would die.

And they had their wish. For one morning, after having eaten an extraordinary supper of flies the night before; after being unusually lively—the swallow was found dead in his cotton bed.

No body cried over him—unless Chryssa, and she did not care to show her tears; but Mrs. Rutherford guessed there had been some shed, and tried to comfort her with the fact that she had done every thing she could to make him live.

"And very likely the cat would have caught him if he had lived to grow up," said Sybil.

"I don't think it's likely at all," said Chryssa with a swelling heart that quite refused this sort of consolation.

"We'll take the little bird up on the hill, Chryssie," her aunt said gently, "and bury him under some green tree, if you like."

"O I should like it very much," said Chryssa, her face brightening. "When shall we go?"

"This afternoon."

"But don't tell any body," said Chryssa, "because they needn't laugh if I did love him."

Mrs. Rutherford did not laugh, and she promised not to tell; so after dinner Chryssa carried the basket softly out to the chip yard, and waited there for Sybil and Mrs. Rutherford, and they all set out together. But when Chryssa had carried the basket a little way down the road, Mrs. Rutherford said,

"Now Chryssie, let me take the basket, and you run with Sybil."

And though Chryssa didn't want to give it up

at first, yet she did feel lighter hearted when it was out of her hands, and she and Sybil ran up the hill, treading the pennyroyal under their little feet. Overhead the old swallows darted to and fro, showing their forked tails in every position against the blue sky, but they never guessed what was in the basket, and only thought of the hungry nest-full in the chimney.

The woods that edged the hill where they were going were pine woods, and on the ground the dry pine leaves made a soft brown carpet. There was green moss too, growing about the old stumps, and here and there an oak tree had scattered acorns; while in some other places a large or a small snail had died and left his shell. Squirrels ran nimbly about, and chattered and barked, and little birds twittered and chirped softly among the pine branches; while the sun could hardly get in at all, the trees were so thick.

At the very edge of the wood, just where the pine leaves began and the green grass disappeared, there they buried the swallow, under a

little pine tree. Two or three stones were laid down to mark the place, and Mrs. Rutherford said that every time they came that way each of them should lay another stone on the swallow's grave, and so in time it would be quite a large heap. Then they walked away, and Mrs. Rutherford said she would take them back into the woods and show them the head of the spring.

"What is the head of the spring?" said Chryssa.

"Why it's where it first comes out of the ground," said Sybil. "It's the same spring that makes the spout,—I heard grandpa speak of it the other day."

Now nobody knew where the spring came from in the first place, but its first appearance in that neighborhood was in another part of the forest, where there were no pine trees, but where the great maples grew and laid their heads together, whispering all sorts of things to the summer wind. Here the spring came welling up out of the ground, and made quite a little spot of water,

whereon were all sorts of little natural boats — acorn cups and dry leaves and bits of bark. Then the stream ran on to the edge of the woods, winding about as it liked, and then it sunk down, down, into the hill, and kept quite out of sight till it reached the field where Sybil and Chryssa had sailed boats. There it came out and took a turn through all the wooden troughs, and jumped out at the further end.

To the shadowy spring-head among the trees Mrs. Rutherford brought the children, and there they all sat down upon the grey stones by the side of the water. The water was very quiet and bright and very cold, and Mrs. Rutherford made a little cup of a mullein leaf, and dipped it in the spring and gave the children a drink. They liked the rough feeling of the leaf—it was pleasanter than smooth glass, and the water was delicious.

“This cup would have been *almost* small enough for the swallow,” said Sybil.

“Aunt Esther,” said Chryssa, “was that the *only* little swallow in the chimney?”

"O no, there are plenty more, I dare say."

"I hope they'll all stay there," said Sybil, —
"*we* don't want any more of 'em."

"Plenty more in the same nest?" said Chryssa.

"Probably three more — and perhaps a dozen more nests. The nests are very shallow, that is one reason the young ones fall out. They are made of sticks glued together, and sometimes when the rain comes down very hard it softens the glue and the sticks fall apart."

"What makes them build in the chimney, I wonder," said Sybil.

"Perhaps they like the warmth," said Mrs. Rutherford, "though I think they sometimes build in chimneys where there is no fire. In the unsettled parts of the country they build in an old hollow tree — a dozen together, but whenever they can find chimneys they like them best. Early in September they go away to a warmer climate, and then in May they come back again. Then they build their nests and lay four little white eggs, and when the young ones are hatched the old birds are busy all day long bringing them food."

"I should think so!" said Sybil. "I'm sure it took flies enough to content that one."

"And when the night comes," said Mrs. Rutherford, "and other birds go to sleep, the swallow still skims about over land and water, seeking food for her noisy young ones."

"So *that* was what made him scream so in the night!" said Chryssa,—"he was used to being fed then!"

"Yes, that was it." said her aunt.

"But, Aunt Esther," said Chryssa. "what could I do? I couldn't keep awake all night as the old swallows do. And I couldn't have fed him, if I *had*."

"No indeed, Chryssie," said Mrs. Rutherford smiling. "You did all you could, my dear."

"Yes, that you did," said Sybil. "I wouldn't have done half as much."

Chryssa felt a little comforted after that, but she thought to herself that it was a great pity the swallows did not build their nests deeper, so that nothing could fall out.

When they got back to the house again there

was the little green wagon standing by the gate and the old brown horse harnessed to it; and Mr. Ruthven stood near with a long whip in his hand.

"Ah there you are! just in time, deary," he said. "I'm going to the post office. Jump in, Chryssa, and we'll have a fine ride. Won't you go too, Sybil?"

"No thank you, sir," said Sybil, (she didn't love driving much) "I think I won't go to-day."

So Chryssa jumped in and perched herself up on the seat, with the great buffalo robe covering the cushions, and Mr. Ruthven got in slowly and took his seat by her side, and Aaron ran down to open the gate, and away they went.

How sweet it was! with the brown horse trotting easily along, and the little green wagon rolling on after him! Mr. Ruthven showed Chryssa how careful he was not to let the wheel come against any stones that lay in the road, so that they were hardly jolted a bit. There was grain and grass in the meadows, with flocks of sheep, and droves of pigs, and of horses, and of

cows; and by the wayside were flowers — yellow and purple and red; and two or three times Mr. Ruthven made the old horse stop, and let Chryssa jump out and pick the flowers; and then when she got back into the wagon he told her what all the flowers were called. And you would really have thought the old brown horse liked flowers too—he was so willing to stand still while Chryssa got them. O, it was beautiful in those days, along those pleasant roads! And Mr. Ruthven, with his brown coat and straw hat and white hair, looked down at Chryssa's little brown head—which her sun-bonnet covered when it didn't fall off, and talked to her as gladly as she talked to him. It didn't matter how long the ride was—nor whether the sun was hot or the road muddy,—Chryssa enjoyed every minute. And so they went on to the post office and got the newspaper, and Mr. Ruthven spoke to every body he met, and every body looked glad to see him; and then they drove home again.

Chryssa had been to the post office a great many times in this way; but on this particular

morning a very strange thing happened. The brown horse stopped at the big gate, and Chryssa jumped out and opened and shut it, and Mr. Ruthven drove up to the little gate in the chip yard. But as soon as every body was out of the wagon, and Aaron came to lead the horse down to the barn, up jumped a black hen from under the seat!—and cackled as if she was out of her senses. As well she might, for no black hen, I suppose, ever went to the post office before. But it was soon found out that she had made her nest in the wagon; and being on her nest when they drove away, had staid quiet (like a sensible hen) till they came back. And there in the bottom of the wagon were two white eggs!

CHAPTER VIII.

IT happened one Sunday that the minister was sick and could not preach, and so nobody could go to church. Doubtless the old horse was not sorry (if he found out why he might graze and roll all day in his green meadow), and I think even Chryssa and Sybil were well enough pleased. Staying at home was a variety—and the home Sunday lessons were always interesting, and they had plenty of Sunday books. So on the whole, the two children felt well satisfied as they stood in the porch after breakfast and looked out; for if it was a lovely day for going to church it was also a lovely day for staying at home. The air was very soft and mild, the bright sunbeams felt like a warm hand wherever they fell, the fields were as green as they could be, and the birds sang—as only birds can!

Mrs. Rutherford told the children that they might go and sit out of doors to read and learn their

lessons and hymns, and that if they found a nice place she would come too after a while. And at once began a grand preparation.

First, to choose out books. Bibles and hymn-books were laid together, and then Sybil and Chryssa looked over the whole array of Sunday books. Sybil soon suited herself, but Chryssa studied the matter for some time. There was Juliana Oakley, with the delectable account of the pea-green tea room and the little brown bird: there was Anna Ross—always interesting and beautiful: there was what Chryssa called “my Nathan Dickerman,” with its black back and yellow cover; but at last she chose “my Little Millennium”—which though it was very small, and had very dingy coloured covers, and a name which meant nothing to Chryssa’s ears, was yet a very pretty story of a flock of little children.

“Now Chryssa,” said Sybil, “if you’re satisfied, we’ll go up stairs and get ready.”

“What are you going to do with the pencil and all that paper?” said Chryssa.

“O, I’m going to make notes,” said Sybil. “Come—” and off she went.

Chryssa thought for a minute about the propriety of taking pencil and paper and making notes herself, but then ran away after Sybil. And the getting ready was quite an affair, for Sybil thought sun-bonnets quite too commonplace for the occasion, and yet it would not do to go bareheaded. So she took a little yellow silk shawl and pinned it tight round her head (as much like a yellow apple as could be) and then covered up Chryssa's brown hair with a shawl which was striped red and green. To be sure their faces were not shaded in the least, but when people wear turbans they cannot have every thing else at the same time.

Then with loaded arms the children set forth, carrying all the books—the pencil and paper—laboriously down to the back of the barn.

Down in this meadow some hay had been cut, and there was one great stack—quite dry and sweet—very near the barnyard. Here Sybil and Chryssa established themselves,—making two nests in the hay for arm chairs, and patting and pushing down another flat place for the books. And here they sat. Overhead waved a great but-

ternut tree, sending flickering shadows far and wide on the smooth meadow; in the next field the cows were feeding leisurely; on the green hill-side the sheep rambled and bleated and cropped the short grass. Every thing was perfect—except the turbans!—they did feel a little tight and hot,—but being turbans, nobody minded that. The worst thing was that it was hard to study—with every thing tempting one's eyes away; but after a little gazing at the sheep and the butternut shadows, the children set themselves fairly to work, and the lessons were soon learned. Then the hymns—and after that they began to sing other hymns, which they had learned before.

While they were singing Mrs. Rutherford came down the hill, and she stood to hear them—thinking of the time when every body will sing God's praises, both on earth and in heaven. But when she came through the barnyard and caught sight of the two turbans in the haycock, she smiled for more than pleasure. She said nothing about them however, but came and sat in the hay too, though she had only a white sun-bonnet.

"O Aunt Esther!" said both the young ones, "it's splendid out here! And now won't you tell us a story?"

"Do you want to hear a story about heaven?" said Mrs. Rutherford. "That is what I was thinking about."

"What *could* make you think of heaven just then?" said Sybil.

"I believe it was this beautiful earth. Because the Bible says heaven will be a great deal more beautiful than the earth ever is."

"What is the story, Aunt Esther?" said Chryssa.

"I don't like to think about heaven — much," said Sybil, — "I don't want to die."

"People don't die any sooner for thinking about heaven," said Mrs. Rutherford.

"But Aunt Esther, all the good children in books die," said Sybil.

"The good children who live to grow up do not have their lives written till they are men and women — that's all," said Mrs. Rutherford, smiling. "Some good children God takes at once to

heaven, and some he lets grow up and work for him in the world a great many years. They may be content, either way."

Sybil looked off at the hillside, a little soberly.

"I was thinking," said Mrs. Rutherford, "what a beautiful thing it is for a child to go to heaven. Once where I lived, there was a poor little cottage near by, and the people that lived there were poor, and not very good. They used to quarrel a great deal, and it was said they did other bad things. But they had one little child,—a pretty, fair little thing, just big enough to run about; and she didn't look as if she belonged to the house. Nobody ever saw her without a smile ready, and I think no one ever heard her cry,—and so it seemed she did not belong there—for one day God took her to heaven."

"I'm glad," said Chryssa with a little long breath. "Because she couldn't be happy with such bad people. Did you see her, Aunt Esther?"

"I saw her—I was there. She was very sick when I went, and I held her in my arms all the while till she died. I was very glad too, Chryssie

— to think of the white robes she should have for those poor rags, to think of the angels that were waiting for her, to think of the open gates of the heavenly city. What are some of the verses about it? — do you remember?”

“‘The gates are twelve pearls,’ said Chryssa, — ‘and there shall be no night there.’”

“‘And the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick,’” added Sybil.

Mrs. Rutherford went on —

“‘And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.’ ‘And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.’”

“Aunt Esther!” said Sybil, after a little pause, “I know all that’s true — and it sounds beautiful, — why doesn’t every body — and I too — love to think of going there?”

Mrs. Rutherford smiled.

“You must pray God to make you love him,” she said, — “and when you love him with all

your heart, then you will love to think about heaven."

The children went on with their lessons after that, but they thought of the white robes and the pearly gates all the while; and when they had said their verses and hymns, taking off the shawl turbans to feel the breeze, they leaned their heads down on the sweet hay, and read the whole account of the heavenly city, and prayed in their hearts that God would give them a home there, for Christ's sake.

CHAPTER IX.

THE spring had passed away, and the summer was running after. Now the grass was long and stout, and began to show its queer little flowers; and whenever the wind blew it waved and bent down and rose up again in the most graceful manner. But when the rain fell, the grass fell too, and sometimes could not get up again. Now the children sang,

Clover! clover! all over — all over!
Away on the hill white clover grows,
And down in the meadow red clover blows,
And off by the rocks, as all the world knows,
Is yellow clover —
All over, all over!

Clover, clover! all over — all over!
The bee his little honey-bag brings,
And hums a tune — while the grasshopper sings;
And butterflies come with their gorgeous wings,
And clover, clover,
Flit over — flit over!

Clover, clover! all over, all over!
The mower comes with his shining blade,
And the clover in wilting heaps is laid;

And the sun shines out, and the hay is mado,
And clover, clover,
Is over — is over!

Clover, clover! all over — all over!
For out in the barn is clover hay,
And the clover roots are working away
To give us again, as soon as they may,
Sweet clover, clover,
All over! all over!

The little lambs had grown very much since spring, and were quite white and fat. Sybil and Chryssa had grown fat too, but it could not be said that they had grown white — they had rather grown brown.

One morning when Chryssa went out to the chip yard before breakfast, she saw Mr. Ruthven walking down the hill towards the barn, and she went on after him; and as she got to the turn of the road she saw Aaron and another man trying to drive the whole flock of sheep through the bar place into the barnyard. The men were clapping and shouting, and the sheep seemed frightened out of their wits: they leaped over each other, and tumbled about, and ran, and stood still, and cried "Ba-a-a!" a great many times; but all

seemed afraid to go into the barnyard. At last one big sheep took a great jump in the air — and then every other sheep took just the same jump after him, up in the air and through the bars, though there was nothing in the world to jump over. Chryssa saw her grandfather pointing towards the sheep and talking to the men, and she wondered very much what was going on. Suddenly she heard Sybil call out —

“Chryssa! Chryssa! come here! — just as quick as you can. — Run!”

Chryssa felt sorry to leave the sheep, but she ran just as fast as she could, and was so much out of breath when she got to the house, that she could not ask what the matter was. Sybil stood there, beckoning.

“Come right in the house, Chryssa! — they’re going to kill a sheep!”

Chryssa came in, fast enough; she never even stopped to ask why the sheep must be killed: she rushed up stairs as hard as she could to her room, shut the door, threw herself down on the bed, and half smothered herself in the pillows.

There she lay, nobody knows how long,—not daring to move or raise her head for fear she should hear the sheep, and perfectly horror-struck at the idea of its being killed.

After a long while Sybil opened the door and came in.

“Why Chryssa!” she said—“are you there? I’ve looked every where for you. What are you doing?”

“I’m not doing any thing,” said Chryssa in a stifled voice.

“What’s the matter? why don’t you come down to breakfast?”

“I can’t”—said Chryssa.

“Why not?—have you hurt yourself?”

“No,” said Chryssa mournfully,—nothing was hurt but her feelings, and she didn’t know they were.

“Are you hiding up here because of the sheep?” said Sybil.

To which Chryssa answered by a very deep sigh from under the pillows.

“O well, the sheep is dead, long ago,” said

Sybil, "so it's no use to think any more about that. Come down to breakfast, child."

"What did they kill it for?" said Chryssa, getting up with another sigh and beginning to brush her hair, which was very much tumbled by the pillows.

"Why to eat," said Sybil. "Grandpa said the butcher hadn't come round, and he thought that was the best thing to do."

Chryssa said nothing, but she thought as she went down stairs, that for her part she would rather have lived upon bread and milk, or even blackberry pie, till the butcher came. But when she saw the sheep afterwards, at the cellar kitchen door where the men were cutting it up, it looked so little like a sheep that she began to forget it had ever been one.

After breakfast she went out to the chip yard again, and this time there was nothing to disturb her. Hardly a sound could be heard except what was made by the mowers down in the meadow. There were four of them, and they were all whetting their scythes together. Chryssa

had often heard Garret whet his scythe, at home, but this sound seemed different; and when the men put their rifles into their left hands, and began to mow—all together, every scythe going just as fast as the rest—she was quite charmed. How the four men swept the grass before them! how their scythes glittered in the sun—how the dewy grass lay in long heaps on either side!

“They get along fast, don’t they, dearie?” said Mr. Ruthven. He had come out to look at the mowers too.

“O yes!” said Chryssa. “How pretty it is!”

Mr. Ruthven smiled, and walked on to the edge of the chip yard where it sloped down to the meadow; and Chryssa went after him.

Along this green bank were several apple trees, some at the top and some at the bottom and some half way up, and in one of them there was a swing. The tree was very crooked, sticking out its boughs just where you didn’t expect them, and the swing hung from a long branch that stretched itself out towards the next apple tree as if to shake hands. Mr. Ruthven sat down

in the swing to watch the mowers, and Chryssa stood by his side. Then she thought to herself how nice it would be if she could give him a swing!—and she tried to push the board seat, but it wouldn't move. Then she put both her hands on Mr. Ruthven's shoulder and gave a great push,—and the swing really moved about three inches and he with it. Chryssa felt very pleased then, and her grandfather turned towards her and smiled as if he was very pleased too: and Chryssa had no doubt that he enjoyed swinging very much. So she swung him after her fashion all the time he sat under the apple tree. Then they both went down into the meadow to see the mowers nearer by. The air seemed sweeter than ever then, with the fresh smell of the cut grass, and the grasshoppers were so busy and in such numbers that Chryssa thought it was very well she was not afraid of them, or she could not have staid in the field a minute. There were dear little birds too, as busy as they, hopping from swath to swath that the mowers left behind them.

In the meadow were little stony spots — sometimes one large stone, sometimes a heap of little ones, all surrounded with bushes. Flowers grew with the bushes, too, like a fringe — cahosh and Indian pipe. Some of the bush stems were dark red, spotted with white, and had a sweet spicy smell; and Mr. Ruthven told Chryssa that they were called Indian willow, because the Indians used to smoke the bark instead of tobacco; and he cut three or four of the stems, and told Chryssa he would smoke the bark for her when they got back to the house, and let her smell how sweet it was.

By this time the sun was pretty hot, and Chryssa thought she would go somewhere into the shade. But the mowers did not seem to mind it at all, only they wiped their faces on their shirt sleeves now and then, and mowed away as before; and Mr. Ruthven staid to see them.

When Chryssa got back to the house she heard a hen cackling very loud in the garden, and as she opened the gate the hen flew over the fence. Then Chryssa had a real hunt for

the nest. She looked all along by the fence, under the dill and coriander bushes, and between the rows of beets, and in the onion bed, and under the bean vines,—nice places for nests, but no nests. She did find some of the kittens, playing hide and seek round the bean poles, but they ran as only kittens could. Then she went on further where the squash vines grew, covering the ground with their great green leaves and yellow flowers; and here the hen had made her nest, under a squash leaf; and in it there were three eggs. Then Sybil called out from the back door,

“O Chryssa! come here and see what grandpa has got for you.”

Chryssa ran, but not very fast, because she had the eggs in her apron and was afraid of breaking them.

It seemed that the mowers as they cut down the grass in the meadow had found a bumble bee's nest, and Mr. Ruthven had brought it home for Chryssa because it was full of honey: outside it looked very much like a wasp's nest. But

the cells were filled and closed up, only where the mowers had broken two or three the honey dropped out in clear bright drops. Chryssa did not stop to eat honey just then,—she put the nest away in the house and came out again. She had a new thought in her head.

The kittens must be growing less wild—here they were in the garden, clambering over the fence; and there was old Mrs. Tortoiseshell sitting on a pile of boards near the fence, dozing and winking her eyes in the sunshine. It came into Chryssa's head, that if *she* sat there, with the old cat in her lap, perhaps the kittens would come and pay them both a visit.

So seating herself on the pile of boards, and lifting the heavy old cat into her lap, Chryssa petted and coaxed her till she lay still, and then began to call the kittens. Mrs. Tortoiseshell never called them once, but went to sleep; and Chryssa mewed and mewed till she was tired. But at last—great reward of patience and perseverance!—she saw the yellow kitten peeping at her from behind the fence close by, and soon the

little pussy crept through the fence,—then she stopped and looked. Chryssa sat quite still and mewed once more. The yellow kitten came a step nearer — then another step, walking as carefully as if she had been on eggs instead of clover blossoms; and by this time the black and white kitten showed its pink nose through the fence too, and then the black one appeared; for Chryssa's mews were most insinuating. The little yellow puss came softly on, till she could touch the old cat's head with her nose; and at last she stepped on Chryssa's lap and began to rub against the old cat and purr. Chryssa trembled with delight! and even Mrs. Tortoiseshell found it pleasant, and said "Mur-r-r!" on her own account. This brought out little Spot at once, and the black kitten followed; but little Tortoise sat perched on the fence, and the white kitten looked through, and the grey one hid under a currant bush. That was all Chryssa could do that day but you may believe she was well content. She sat there looking at her lap full of cats till the mowers came home to dinner, and the minute they appeared every kitten ran away.



Hard Maple.



CHAPTER X.

“**A**UNT Esther,” said Chryssa, one morning, “when is Fulvi coming?”

“In a few days,” said Mrs. Rutherford.

“I wish I could do something with my doll’s head!” said Chryssa.

“What is the matter?” said her aunt smiling.

“Does it ache?”

“O Aunt Esther!” said Chryssa laughing,— “you know it doesn’t, very well! But it looks so.”

“Let me see it,” said Mrs. Rutherford. “Why I have heard nothing about the doll since we came to Hard Maple.”

“No,” said Chryssa, “because I’ve been so busy; but I thought if Fulvi came we might want her.”

“Want Fulvi?” said her aunt, laughing.

Chryssa laughed too, and said she meant the doll.

“Well let me see how her head looks,” said Mrs. Rutherford.

So Chryssa brought the doll, who looked indeed as if she had grown grey — so much was her black hair worn and rubbed off.

“I think she does want freshening up,” said Mrs. Rutherford. “If I were to paint her head, Chryssa — how would that do?”

“O that would be the very thing!” said Chryssa, “but you haven’t got any paint.”

“O yes I have,” said her aunt — “the painters left some black paint when they were here the other day.” And Mrs. Rutherford brought a little paint pot that was — as Miss Flint said — “as black as pitch” inside. Then she took dolly carefully in one hand, and a small brush in the other, and painted every bit of her hair till it shone again, and was just about as black as ink.

“She looks quite splendid now,” said Sybil.

“I would put her somewhere out of doors, Chryssie, till her hair is dry,” said Mrs. Rutherford.

So Chryssa took the doll out to the front of the house and set her up against the trunk of one of the great trees, between two of the roots,

to dry. Then she went to look at her bee's nest. But the bee's nest disgusted her very much. For in some of the cells there were young bees, just hatched out; and as young bees look very much like white worms, Chryssa disliked them exceedingly. To be sure, the honey in the other cells was bright and clear, but she could not bear to touch it. Neither could she bear to tell the difficulty to her grandfather, because he was so kind to bring her the nest, and Chryssa was afraid he would feel bad if she didn't eat the honey. At last she put it up on the mantelpiece, and there it staid for some time,—after that I don't know what became of it.

Dolly sat out at the foot of the tree all day, because, as Chryssa said, "it seemed as if her hair never would get dry." And as the day was warm, Mr. Ruthven sat in the porch, and Mrs. Rutherford brought out her sewing and sat there too. And Sybil brought a pillow case to hem, but she didn't do much, because Chryssa was running races in the grass and Sybil had to jump up and go after her. Then Mr.

Ruthven took Chryssa on his lap and sung to her,

“O where are you going, sweet robin?”—

and many other things. Then he went into the house, and Mrs. Rutherford told the children the story of

THE LITTLE WILD GOOSE.

“The little wild goose,” said Mrs. Rutherford, “was the child of the old wild goose, and had half a dozen wild goslings for brothers and sisters. The old goose made her rough nest on the ground, far up in North America, where there was just a wild region of country and tribes of Indians, with a few white hunters who had come to kill the fur animals or to buy their skins from the Indians. In this nest she laid seven greenish-white eggs, and set upon them till the goslings came out. They were yellow, downy little things, whereas the old wild goose herself was covered with feathers, and so was her mate. Their heads and necks were black, and their tails were black, and their bills; with white chins

and throats, and brown backs and sides. But they thought the yellow goslings were beautiful, nevertheless.

“For a while the old wild goose fed her young ones upon sedge roots, and berries, and grass; and every few days she took them to a little inlet for the benefit of sea bathing and gravel. When they were old enough she and her mate led them off to the shores of Hudson’s Bay, and there they lived through the summer, eating water plants and having great swimming parties; for by this time the goslings had finished and put on their feather coats. But when the fall weather began to come, and the nights grew cold, and the bay began to show white crusts of ice, then all the wild geese — young and old — came together in large flocks to consult what they should do. For if the bays should freeze over entirely they could get no more sea cabbage, — and besides, the cold weather did not agree with their health. It was therefore unanimously resolved that they would all go South, as usual. The little wild geese felt alarmed at the prospect of

such a long flight, for they had not used their wings very much as yet, but the old ones told them that they had made the journey very often, and it was delightful. There was only one drawback, and that was the risk they ran of being shot; but as this was a thing that might happen to a wild goose any where, it was not worth mentioning in connection with the journey.

“So one fine day, all the wild geese rose up in the air together, spreading their wings and screaming, and having put an old gander at the head to lead the way, the rest followed in two single lines, which spread out from him like a V. They flew on and on,—sometimes stopping to eat and sometimes to bathe, and then taking flight as before. Every once in a while the old gander called out, ‘*Houk?*’—which meant, ‘How are you all getting on?’ And then one of the geese would answer, ‘*Wook!*’—as much as to say, ‘As well as possible!’ And the country people said, ‘There go the wild geese! how early the winter sets in!’

“The worst thing, as the old ones had said,

was the danger of being shot. Sometimes the Indians imitated the voice of a wild goose so exactly, that the whole flock came down to the meadow to see what it could be about there; and then the Indians discharged their arrows and killed three or four,—the little wild goose lost three of his brothers in this way at one time. Then when they got into the United States and alighted to feed, some hunters shot at them from behind a wood, and another was killed and another had her wing broken; and this one the hunter picked up and carried home and put in his barnyard. Then another was wounded as he was swimming in a lake, but he dived and came up again nobody knew where. So by the time the little wild goose got safe to the southern country, there was not one of his brothers and sisters left.

“There, through the warm winter, the wild flock fed and grew fat, and the young ones became more perfect geese than ever before; but as soon as the spring came they said it was needful to go North at once, for they could not

bear the hot summer. Then they began their flight again, just as before.

“How glad the people were to see them; saying, ‘Now we shall have warm weather, here come the wild geese!’ And the flock went on, passing over one State and another, and when they came to New Jersey they stopped there to feed.

“Now this was the State where the hunter had carried home the wounded sister of the little wild goose; and when the flock rose up in the air next day, they flew directly over the barnyard where she was kept, for her wound was cured. There she had spent the winter among the tame geese, the ducks, and the chickens, growing fat upon the farmer’s corn, and doubtless supposing that she should never eat sea cabbage again.

“But when the whole flock of wild geese came flying along, high up in the sky, just when they were over the barnyard the old General gander called out ‘Houk!’ as loud as he could; and to the great delight of the little wild goose, his sister down in the barnyard called out ‘Wook!’ in reply; and spreading her wings she

came right up into the air, and they all went on to Hudson's Bay together."

Now just as Mrs. Rutherford finished this story, Miss Flint came and told the children that she was going to make cheese, and they ran down into the cellar kitchen to look on.

The cellar kitchen was very full. There was first Miss Flint, with her sleeves rolled up and a clean blue apron tied round her waist,—there were two great cheese tubs, and over one was set a large splinter basket woven so as to leave great holes between the splints; and over the fire was a brass kettle of milk. Into this milk Miss Flint dipped her finger from time to time, to try if it was warm enough; and when it was, she lifted it off and turned the milk into one of the tubs. The milk stood there for a while, and then the children saw that it had become quite thick, like loppered milk.

"Why what made it do so?" said Sybil.

"O Miss Flint!" said Chryssa, "your milk's sour!"

“No indeed!” said Miss Flint — “it’s as sweet as a nut. But I put rennet in on purpose to turn it.”

“Rennet?” said Sybil — “I don’t know what rennet is.”

“Well I guess you wouldn’t know any better if I told you,” said Miss Flint; and she took a wooden knife and began to cut through the white curd in every direction. Then she put in her hand, stirring it about and breaking the curd into little bits, and as she broke the curd there came out a thin whitish-looking liquid which Miss Flint called “whey.” She took a wooden ladle and ladled out some of this whey, and then turned all that was left — curd and whey together — into the white cheese cloth that lay in the cheese basket. And then the whey soaked through the cloth, and ran down into the tub at a great rate. All this took some time, but when the children felt tired they ran out of the kitchen door and down to the spout, and came back quite refreshed.

When the most of the whey had run out, and

the white curd in the basket looked quite dry, Miss Flint put in salt and mixed it up with her hands; and then she took another cloth and laid it in the cheese hoop, which stood on a little round board, and in that she put the curd—packing it down till all was in, and folding the cloth over. Then she carried it up stairs to the cheese press which stood in the stoop, and as soon as the weight came down on the curd the whey began to run out again, and came drip, drip, into the yellow wooden pail that Miss Flint set to catch it.

“There”—she said,—“that’s all you can see to-day. To-morrow you shall see me turn it, and when I begin to pare it then you’ll have a good time.”

So Miss Flint went off to the dairy, and Sybil and Chryssa went out under the great trees again; wondering very much what the paring of the cheese could have to do with their having “a good time.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE day came which was to bring Fulvi; so **T** did the stage coach. A heavy, lumbering, brown leather and yellow paint thing it was, rolling and jolting and curtseying along at the tail of four horses, and followed by a cloud of dust; but it looked quite beautiful to the children, and Chryssa exclaimed,

“There’s Fulvi’s head! I saw her straw bonnet!”

“And there’s the baby!” said Sybil.

And when the coach actually stopped at the gate, and the driver got down and opened the door, it was hard to tell which was most glad—Fulvi or Chryssa. The straw bonnet being speedily got rid of, as a thing altogether too cumbersome for business, the two young ones put their arms round each other and set off—to go everywhere, see everything, and make all possible plans. What watching for kittens and hunt-

ing for eggs!—what collecting of milkweed silk, pennyroyal, and snail shells!—what wandering about in the sweet air! ah, there never was any thing like it. Nothing brought them back to the house but dinner, and nothing would have kept them in the house afterwards but the fact that they must dress and go out to tea—therefore it was best not to get tired, and besides dressing took some time.

Not that there was so much to put on or off—the little short-sleeved frocks were not bulky, and the few hooks and eyes were soon fastened; but there was so much running and dancing about—such “O Fulvi’s!” and “O Chryssa’s!” and “Children, don’t you ever mean to stand still?” that nobody was ready one bit too soon. For they were to walk, and the walk though not long, was yet not short.

It was very pretty—with the afternoon sun shining soft and warm upon everything; with the squirrels on the fence, and the children in their light frocks fluttering like so many butterflies about the road. Up the hill, where the

brook foamed along under a little wooden bridge and then jumped ten feet down a pile of rocks; then further on, where the same brook made itself useful by turning a saw mill, and where the great logs that were to be cut into boards lay about on all sides. Further on still, the brook set a carding mill in motion, and the whirr of the machinery and the rush of the water made quite a little hubbub. Beyond this mill was a little pond, where ducks with necks of changeable green and black, sailed about with a troop of yellow ducklings; now floating on the bright water, now diving down head first, leaving nothing but the tip end of a tail to say there had ever been a duck there. Pleasant-looking white houses stood about this pond, and little dogs—black or red—rushed out and barked at the strangers.

The house where they were going stood back from the road, and had a garden full of gay flowers; and it was pleasant, too, within, and everybody was very kind to the children. But they didn't love very much to sit still in the

parlour and see the older people knit and talk, though they were too polite to say so or to seem impatient. Fulvi and Chryssa sat as still as mice, perched up on their chairs, and only spoke to each other in low tones about the flowers, the little dog, or the Maltese cat that sat in the window. But though they tried very hard to keep perfectly grave, sometimes when their eyes met it was almost impossible, — so full of fun were they; and then each one almost choked herself in the attempt to keep from laughing out. How glad they were when the lady of the house gave them leave to go out and run about till tea time! They ran about carefully it is true, because they had on new shoes and nice dresses; but still they could go down to the pond and watch the ducks, and pick up the little shells that lay on the shore; and above all they could talk.

Then came tea, with its variety of good things, and then the pleasant walk home in the starlight. But as soon as they got home, the two children seized the doll with her new

black hair, (it was quite dry now) and sat in one of the recesses in the parlour for the rest of the evening. Pretty places those recesses were, each side of the fireplace; each one had a large window, and two cupboards — one long and one short.

“If we could have this for our play-room, how nice it would be!” said Fulvi.

“Well,” said Chryssa, “we’ll ask Aunt Esther, — I dare say she’d just as lieve we’d be here as any where.”

But though Mrs. Rutherford had no manner of objection to having the children there, she thought — and so did Mrs. Lee — that the dolls and their clothes would be better elsewhere.

“Why don’t you play in the garret?” she said. “That’s a fine large place, and nobody to disturb you.”

“Well I guess that would be better,” said both the young ones — “because there’s plenty of room. Only we can’t go up there now — that’s a pity.”

It was astonishing what a difference the com-

ing of Fulvi had made in Sybil—she seemed to have grown up all at once. To see the way in which she carried Mrs. Lee's little baby round the house, to hear her call Chryssa and Fulvi "the children," you would have thought she must be quite a young lady.

But Chryssa and Fulvi did not mind it very much, because after all they knew they were not very big.

Now the children, and I call Sybil one of them, had requested to be allowed to make some molasses candy that night, in honour of Fulvi's arrival. As soon therefore as Miss Flint had washed up her own tea dishes, she brought out the iron pot and set it on the coals in front of the kitchen fire, and then poured into it a quantity of molasses from a great stone jug; and there for some time the pot of molasses stood, looking quiet enough, though in reality it was getting ready to boil just as hard as it could. By and by a thick yellow scum covered it all over, and then—the first thing any body knew, the scum began to

rise up very fast to the top of the pot, and the molasses was ready to boil over! But Miss Flint was ready too, and she stirred it down, and blew it, and did all sorts of things to make it keep its place; and at last it was content to boil on quietly, without rushing out upon the hearth. When this point was reached, the children thought the candy must be near done, and they ran to get a spoon and a cup of water to try it. Miss Flint however told them it wasn't *beginning* to be done—and sure enough, the drops of hot molasses that went into the cup, instead of becoming thick and stiff, became just drops of cold molasses!

“I guess the molasses isn't good,” said the children, peering into the iron pot.

“The molasses is first rate,” said Miss Flint, —“but candy won't get done in a minute.”

“I think it has been a good many minutes,” said Chryssa; and then she and Fulvi ran back into the recess to talk to the doll.

The molasses boiled and boiled—sinking down in the iron pot till all the children were afraid

there would be nothing left of it. The first cup of water was poured out, and filled anew, because the water got warm with so much hot molasses dropped into it; and little fingers got sticky, and little hearts grew a *little* impatient. At last, even Miss Flint said it was done; and she buttered a large platter and poured some of the hot brown stuff on it, "for taffy;" and then buttered another platter and poured out the rest to be "worked."

Now working candy is by no means an easy matter, for the candy is boiling hot, and little fingers tender and not strong. In the great candy establishments it is quite another affair, though not very *easy* even there. There the candy is poured out upon marble slabs, and strong men whose hands are used to the business roll it and shove it about till it cools a little, and then take it up like a great soft twist of sugar and throw it over a wooden hook on the wall, and pull both ends down together, and throw it over the hook again, and again pull it down. And so on, while the sugar

grows white and candyish. Then they lay it on the marble again, and pull it out in little sticks, and cut them off with a great pair of shears.

But here, in this old kitchen at Hard Maple, everything was quite different. Here were no charcoal ranges, no brilliant gas lights; but a great wood fire made even the corners as light as day, and threw a red glow on the white ceiling and the painted floor. Then instead of strong men, with paper caps on their heads, here was Miss Flint in her dark calico gown, pulling a long bunch of candy all by herself,—pulling it out, and slapping it together, and pulling it out again, in a wonderful manner; while the dark brown molasses changed to light brown and then to yellow under her hands. Here were Mrs. Rutherford and Mrs. Lee pulling another portion between them with all their strength,—pulling it out to a great distance, and then (just when all the children thought it would break in two and fall to the floor) twisting it up double—and then out again,—while everybody laughed. Then there were the chil-

dren — each with little handful of candy, which — pull and pull as they would, — would *not* grow light coloured like the rest. There was Mr. Ruthven, sitting in the chimney corner and laughing at everybody, especially the children; and there was old Mrs. Tortoise, curled up on the hearth, forgetful of her kittens and every thing but that warm fire, unless she dreamed of mice. Lastly, when all was done, there were the dishes covered with taffy — with little uneven sticks of the worked candy, and there was the empty iron pot.

After which every body eat a great deal of candy, showed how she had blistered her hands pulling it, and went to bed. The family state of mind being in the highest degree composed and gratified — the family state of fingers somewhat sticky.

CHAPTER XII.

THE sun himself on Saturday morning could hardly get the start of Chryssa and Fulvi. Not more nimbly did he come up over the trees on the east hill, than they jumped out of their warm beds,—they set themselves to work almost as soon as he did the birds and chickens,—his face was scarce brighter than theirs. Work!—it was funny work. First running out of the front door to see how the weather looked—then running in because it felt cool—then running out because they couldn't stay in, and taking a great race round the chip yard till their cheeks glowed like the morning. And what were they laughing at?—Nobody could tell!—they least of all. Indeed I think Mrs. Rutherford who stood smiling at the window knew best. Clearly Miss Flint did not, for she went to the back door and called them to breakfast, and then declared when she came in, that “those children were

tearing round like mad! and for no earthly reason!" They did not "tear into the house like mad," however, for they came in quietly; nothing danced but their eyes—nothing was out of place but their hair,—that, I must confess, *was* a little disordered. But it was the wind's fault, Mr. Ruthven said as he smoothed it down.

Breakfast over, the first move was to the barn; for Chryssa recollected that with Fulvi's coming and the tea-drinking, she had quite forgotten yesterday to get the eggs; so the two set off together, the basket between them. But it was a bad time of day for getting eggs,—every nest seemed to have a hen on; and some hens looked cross and scolded, and others looked frightened and a mind to run away.

"Well," said Chryssa, "may be we'll find some new nests, any way, so we'll hunt for them;" and the two children went diving and climbing about at a great rate.

Now several of the barns were full of hay, and over the cow sheds were lofts with open windows, that seemed to be full too. In one

the hay came very little above the window sill, and the children thought it so very likely that nests might be up there, that they determined to go in and see. So, carefully and with some trouble opening the lower door, which was fastened with a great wooden pin, the children peeped in. Half the lower space was full of hay, half was empty; but in the part where there was no hay, there *was* a white sheep,—a sheep with two twisted curly horns, and eyes which looked very green in that dark place.

“What’s that sheep here for?” said Fulvi.

“I don’t know”—said Chryssa,—“maybe it’s the sheep’s mother that they killed the other day.”

“Maybe she’ll think we killed it,” said Fulvi.

“O, I guess she won’t”—said Chryssa,—“I guess we’ll go in.” But she stood with the door in her hand, and did not set the example.

“It isn’t far,” said Fulvi. “We can just run across and climb up the hay.”

Chryssa looked at Fulvi, and at the hay, and at the sheep. The sheep looked at them, and

probably wondered very much what they wanted. Then the children stepped inside and pulled the door to, and ran very fast across the little shed,



and climbed up *very* fast to the top of the hay mow. But when they were once there, you would have thought they had run past a wolf instead of a quiet sheep,—their hearts beat and they

were quite out of breath. And after all there was no nest in the mow!

Then came the question how to get back,—for as to running past that sheep again, neither Chryssa nor Fulvi could think of it. And though it would have been very amusing to sit in the barn and talk if they had been free to go away, yet to be prisoners up there, with that curly-horned sheep for a jailer, was not amusing at all.

“Well!” said Chryssa, “it’s most dinner time—so they’ll come and look for us:” but as she said so she herself looked out of the window and thought about jumping down. It was not very far from the ground, but to such little people it seemed further than it really was, and both sat down in the hay again. Then both peeped over at the sheep—and the sheep looked up at them with its green eyes.

I don’t know how long this went on,—to the children it seemed a great while; but at length they heard Sybil’s voice.

“Children!” she called.

And Chryssa and Fulvi both answered as loud as they could,

"Here we are! in the cow shed!"

"Children!" said Sybil again,—and again they called out as before.

Then Sybil came down the road and through the door into the barn yard, and stood looking about, with the baby in her arms.

"Where are you?" she said.

"Why, we're up here!" said Chryssa and Fulvi, looking out of the window.

"Up there!" said Sybil,—"well I never saw such children! What are you doing up there, for pity's sake?"

"Why we came up here to look for eggs," said Chryssa.

"Well, what are you *staying* there for?" said Sybil. "Are you waiting for the hens to lay 'em?"

"There aren't any hens here, that's the worst of it," said Fulvi: "we came up all for nothing."

"Why don't you come down then?" said Sybil, while Chryssa clapped her hands at the baby, and the baby danced in reply.

"Because there's a sheep down there, and we're afraid," said both the children.

"Afraid!" said Sybil very contemptuously,—"afraid of a sheep!"

"O, but it's got horns," said Chryssa.

"And green eyes," said Fulvi.

"Well"—said Sybil,— "eyes don't hurt any body—nor horns either,—sheep's horns."

"If you'll just open the door and stand there," said Chryssa, "then we'll come down."

"I shan't do it at all," said Sybil. "It's foolish to be afraid of nothing, and I'm not going to encourage it."

"Then we shan't come down," said Fulvi.

"Very well," said Sybil. "What two little geese!"

"Well now, Syb," said Chryssa, "it's no use to call us geese—you'd be afraid yourself."

"I shouldn't indeed," said Sybil.

"You're older, any how," said Chryssa. "But if you'd just stand inside the door, we'd come right down."

"No,"—said Sybil—"I'll wait for you

here. And you'd better come — dinner's almost ready."

"Well, we're not coming down unless you come inside," said Chryssa.

"Very well" — said Sybil. "Come baby, we'll go." And off she walked, and they heard her go out of the barnyard.

Now was the case desperate, — now did Chryssa and Fulvi look at each other and not know what to do. Of course the sheep had grown much larger while they had been in the hay, and its horns were more curly, and its eyes greener. Go down past that sheep? — not for breakfast, dinner, and supper.

"Well, Fulvi," said Chryssa with a sigh, "we may as well jump! It isn't very far."

So Chryssa took hold of her short dress and tucked it up very carefully lest it might catch in the hay, and down she jumped out of the window — and Fulvi after her! But it wasn't very far, as she said, and the ground was very soft, and the two children much like kittens, — so they lighted on their feet and didn't hurt themselves

one bit ; but ran off like two larks — or two mice let out of prison.

“So!” said Sybil as they came running into the house, “the sheep didn’t eat you up, after all.”

“He didn’t have a chance” — said Chryssa, — “we jumped out of the window.”

Sybil looked rather startled at that, and read them a long lecture about the danger of jumping in general, and out of windows in particular. At all of which the children laughed very much. It was a fine thing to jump out of the cow shed window — after it was done !

The afternoon was a little rainy, and Chryssa and Fulvi thought it was a good time to take possession of their garret play-room. It was a queer old house, this one of Mr. Ruthven’s, as you will think when I show you the way up to the garret. The upper hall, where the staircase came to an end, was more like a room, it was so large ; and while the staircase wound down from the back of it, the whole front was one large window in three divisions, which looked out upon the great trees and the little porch roof where

the green moss grew. From this window you could see the great branches wave and flutter their dark green leaves, and the oriole's nest that hung like a cradle between two long branches, so high and limber that not Mrs. Tortoiseshell herself could ever hope to get there. And you could see the brook as it came out from under the fence, and the meadow beyond, and the woodpeckers tapping the old trees for insects.

On either side of the hall was a large room: one (where Chryssa had slept all the time) looked out upon the east hill with two of its four large windows,—the other room had two windows in front, and at the side three doors. One led into a large closet, and another into a little closet, and each had a window of its own. The third door led to the garret stairs.

The garret was very large, for it went clear across the whole breadth of the house, and it had queer little oval windows at each end, from which you looked down, down into the meadow and over the apple trees. The windows were covered with dust and cobwebs, for many a spider

had not only his play-room but his house up here; and the floor was half covered with butternuts. The butternuts had lain there since last year, and were quite dry and brown, and gave a queer and pleasant smell to the garret. The part where the nuts were *not*, was at the head of the stairs, and by the window where the sun came in as well as he could for the cobwebs, alongside of the great brick chimney. The only thing to be desired was a little more privacy and security; for as the garret door was fastened with a button on the bedroom side, Chryssa and Fulvi could not fasten it after them when they went up; and not only might somebody else fasten them in, but Sybil might perchance hear what they were talking about. However, they agreed to talk softly; and for the rest, if the door was fast why they could burst the button off—they were so strong! To people who had already jumped out of a window, what was a brown button on a yellow garret door?

Up here therefore, with great zeal and pleasure, the two children carried all their play-

things, — the two dolls, Fulvi's wicker cradle, and Chryssa's box of tin pails and kettles; and having moreover procured two pieces of bread, and two little tiny plates of the molasses candy, they pulled the door to as tight as they could, mounted the stairs, and felt established.

Down through the dusty window they could see the rain as it fell; wrapping all the hills in mist, and drooping the leaves, and dampening the white cock's tail feathers. It even pattered softly against the window, as saying — "Let me in, and I will wash your face" — but only made it look dustier than ever, if that could be. Now and then a little country wagon trotted along the road, the hay-makers came in from the field, and the cattle drew near together under the trees.

Chryssa and Fulvi paid not much attention to all this. Now and then, to be sure, they looked out, but they oftener looked in, and thought what a splendid place the garret was. And perhaps it was as well that the garret door could not be fastened, for they would just have been opening and shutting it all the afternoon. First Chryssa

ran down for the little bundle of dress patterns Miss Mantilla had cut for her doll, — then Fulvi ran down for some scraps of calico, — then Chryssa ran down for a spool of thread. For it had suddenly been discovered that the two dolls were sadly in want of summer dresses, and of course the first thing was to make them.

Thus they sat, deep in their work and talk, when all of a sudden Sybil's head appeared, half way up the garret stairs.

"Now Syb!" said Chryssa — "that's too bad! to come there and hear all we say."

"I didn't hear all," said Sybil; "I heard only part; and that wasn't very important. But Miss Flint says she is going to pare the cheese," — and down went Sybil.

Down went the two young ones after her, to see Miss Flint take the cheese from the press, and pare off the uneven edges; and when she gave them the parings to eat, then they understood what she had meant by their having "a fine time." And the parings were as good as the time.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next day was Sunday. The birds sang on as usual—or perhaps a little more; but Miss Dolly sat quiet in the garret, and Chryssa and Fulvi sat down in the porch and learned hymns. They dressed at once for church when they first got up, so there was nothing more to do but read and talk and enjoy the sweet morning, till the wagon was ready. Chryssa and Fulvi thought they would both learn the same hymn, and this was the one they chose.

“Holy children read and pray,
Love God's holy word and day;
Fly from sin and seek his grace,
Learn his will, and Christ embrace;
They are humble, meek, and mild:
Lord, make me a holy child.

“Holy children, when they die,
Go to Christ above the sky;
Take their seats around his throne,
Make his praise forever known.
Now my heart is sin-defiled,
Lord, make me a holy child.”

"I don't know what 'defiled' means," said Fulvi when she had read it over.

"Well, we can ask by and by," said Chryssa, and she went on learning. "I guess it means bad."

"Well, what does 'fly' mean?" said Fulvi. "I can't fly."

"No, but you can run away," said Chryssa — "I s'pose that's just as good. I know Aunt Esther has told me to run away if I couldn't speak pleasantly. What's Aaron going to do with the horse?"

Aaron at this moment came slowly down the hill, leading the brown horse, and the brown horse in his turn drawing the wagon.

"Don't he know we are going to church?" said Fulvi. "I guess I'll run and tell him."

"O he knows," said Chryssa. "Grandpa told him."

Aaron opened the big gate and went through, and then he led the horse right into the midst of the brook, and began to wash the wagon.

"Grandpa wouldn't like to have him do *that*,

Sunday," said Chryssa. "And he's in his room and don't know."

But neither of the children thought it worth while to interfere with Aaron, so they sat and looked on till the horse and wagon came out of the brook, looking very wet and clean and shiny.

Then Fulvi jumped up.

"O Chryssa! we must go and get some dill!"

"What for?" said Chryssa. "We've got to go and get ready."

"O but we want the dill to take to church," said Fulvi. "People always take dill to church."

Chryssa knew that *she* didn't, if people did, and was quite sure she shouldn't want it. But she thought it might be nice to have some to eat on the way, so she followed Fulvi into the garden, and they gathered ever so many little stems of dill, and tied them up in two large bunches. Then they ran in and put on their bonnets, and every body that could got into the wagon, and those who could not were willing to walk.

But as Mr. Rutherford put Chryssa in, he said, "Are you going to eat all that in church?"

Now Chryssa knew that she hadn't meant to eat any of it in church; but she wasn't apt to defend herself against false charges, and besides the wagon started off and she had not much time. She sat looking at her green bunch of dill for a while, and then put her hand over the edge of the wagon and dropped the dill right down in the road; and she wouldn't take any more, though Fulvi offered part of hers.

The bell rang out of the square, white church tower, before the little wagon got near, but the bell itself could not be seen, for there were some green blinds round it on every side. Down in the porch a man stood, pulling a long rope which was fastened to the bell. There were other people standing in the porch and on the steps — boys and men, most of them; and women and little girls were going in and taking their seats; and Chryssa saw that several had bunches of dill. Under the trees in front of the church a good many horses and wagons

were tied — and then Chryssa herself went in and could see no more. There she sat and watched the people as they came in, and saw some looking so grave that she thought they must be very good indeed; but she felt a little afraid of them. And when Fulvi told her that the two children in the next pew were the minister's children, Chryssa found herself looking at them very often, and wondering whether they kept still because they wanted to, or because their father was up in the pulpit. She thought the singing was very sweet, for there was no organ nor any thing of the sort, but a whole row of people at the back of the church stood up and sang together; and Chryssa liked very much to turn round and look at them, but she didn't feel sure that it was quite right. There was another thing which surprised her very much, for many of the boys and men she had seen in the porch did not come into church till after the first prayer; and Chryssa thought that if they must come in just then they might walk a little softly — which they did not.

When service was over, a good many people went to the different houses about the church, to wait for an hour, for then there would be service again; and Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford and Mrs. Lee did so too. Then Chryssa and Fulvi sat up very straight and still, and took a little piece of the cake that one of the young ladies handed round, and eat it with the greatest gravity and propriety; catching all the crumbs in their frocks, and then going to the front door to shake them out—which was quite a pleasant little excursion. Then the bell began to ring again, and people put on their bonnets and walked to the church; and the long row of singers stood up and sang, and the little girls eat all the dill they had left from the morning, and the boys and men came in just as late as before. Then every body got into the wagons and went home.

How pleasant the ride home was! with the fresh air and the afternoon sunshine; and the children had been sitting still so long that now they could hardly sit still any longer; so Mrs.

Rutherford let them get out at the foot of every long hill, and run up to the top—that was quite delightful.

Then when they got home Miss Flint gave them tea and dinner together, which tasted as good as possible—they were so hungry.

After tea, Mrs. Rutherford and Mrs. Lee told the children they might all go up on the east hill to see the sun set, and the two ladies went along; and they sat down on the rocks there together.

“O Aunt Esther,” said Sybil, “this is a grand time for a story!”

Mrs. Rutherford smiled, and looked at all the eager little faces, and then she said,

“Well, I will tell you a story that might have been true—indeed I think the most of it *is* true.

“There was once a pretty village built upon a green hill-side. The hill was very green and the village houses were very white, and they were scattered up and down, from the valley to the very brow of the hill where the church

stood. Some people wondered why the church was built so high up, and said it was a great deal of trouble to get to it; but the view from the church was very beautiful, and worth going up the hill for, if there had been no other reason.

“In this village there were a good many children, both boys and girls, and they thought nothing of the hill, but would run up and down, steep as it was. And every Sunday they all went to church and to Sunday school, and behaved pretty much as other children do. Some were quiet and some fidgety; some listened and some went to sleep. Now it happened one warm Sunday afternoon, that after church was over the children went home to tea and then came out again, and as if they had agreed upon it beforehand, five or six little ones went up to the church steps and sat down there.

“The village houses looked very bright in the setting sun, and the windows glittered like diamonds. The children looked at it for a little while, then presently they began to talk.

“‘Did you see Miss Simpson’s bonnet, Kitty? I should think there was a whole piece of ribbon on it.’

“‘Yes indeed,’ said Kitty, ‘and her frock was trimmed up like every thing.’

“‘And Mary Simpson’s mantilla,’ said another girl,—‘did you see *that*?’

“‘Why I was talking to her for ever so long,’ said another, ‘and she told me where her mother got it.’

“‘Church is a fine place to see things!’ said Kitty,—‘people always wear the best they’ve got, so you have a chance. Molly Bradner shewed me her gold ring, that somebody gave her. And Mrs. Brown had on a bracelet so big!’—

“‘Everybody was at church to-day,’ said Debby; ‘it was such a fine day.’

“‘I wonder if Jane Low saw any thing,’ said Kitty, looking round the group towards a little girl who sat by herself on one corner of the steps. ‘She never does!’

“‘Jane Low!’ called Debby,—‘what have you seen to-day?’

"Jane started and looked round.

"‘Were you talking to me?’ she said. ‘Isn’t it beautiful?’

"‘What?’ said the children, laughing at each other.

"‘Why every thing!’ said Jane. ‘Just look at the hill, how green it is,—and the sky’s as blue as your frock, Kitty. And see how the sun shines on all the windows.’

"‘As if it didn’t do that every night!’ said Kitty. ‘Is that all you’ve seen to-day, Jane?’

"Jane looked as if she knew they were laughing at her, but couldn’t tell why.

"‘I don’t suppose I can see as much as some do,’ she said quietly, ‘but I can see enough to make me feel glad.’

"‘Well what did you see in church?’ said Debby,—‘let’s hear. Maybe you saw *more* than anybody.’

"Jane smiled, but shook her head.

"‘No, I didn’t,’ she said,—‘I don’t know enough to see a great deal.’

"‘Well who was in church?’ said Kitty.

“‘I suppose every body was’—said Jane, ‘but I don’t know. I know God was there, and it seemed almost as if I could see him,—almost,’ she repeated, folding her hands.

“The children hushed a little at that, and stood looking at her. But Jane said no more; and after a little while she got up and walked down the hill towards home, and the rest of the children followed her silently.”

CHAPTER XIV.

BY this time the hay was all cut and put^d away, and now the men were busy at the harvest; cradling wheat with their great cradles, or with their little sickles reaping the oats. Then the farm wagon would come along the road loaded with yellow grain, and the oxen seemed as if they could hardly draw it up the hill and into the barn; and Aaron made such a noise calling to them, that the children kept running out to see what was the matter. Often too, they went with Mr. Ruthven to the grain field, to see the grain cut and bound up in sheaves, and the cart loaded. The field was rather rough to walk in, for it was covered with stubble, but it was beautiful and sweet; and in the corners grew bunches of tall flowers, and sometimes blackberries. The little birds came down to pick up the scattered grain, and Chryssa and Fulvi tried to eat it too, but it was so

small and hard that they would have been a good while getting a breakfast that way.

But there was one place where the sheaves of wheat and the bundles of oats became yet more fascinating, and that was in the big brown barn. Here therefore the children used to go and sit, climbing up over the bundles to a good place, and then choosing and cutting the long yellow straws, cutting off the ear of grain, and tying up the pretty straws in little bundles. No one can tell how sweet it was. Through the great open door they could see the house and the trees and the chip yard and the blue sky; far off in the distance they could hear Aaron screaming to his oxen; and every now and then the oxen themselves came in sight, toiling along with another load of grain, putting their heads together to consult as to the possibility of ever getting it home. But the upper barn floor where the children sat was full, except in the middle—over the trap door, and Aaron would drive round to the lower floor; and then the children could hear him hallooing, and the oxen stamping, away down below their feet.

Then Chryssa and Fulvi from their high perch up in the straw bundles, would see Sybil coming out of the house;—whereupon they at once scrambled further back and hid themselves. Sybil came on to the barn.

“Children!” she called.

Nothing stirred—unless something which sounded like a mouse in the straw, and Sybil couldn’t bear mice; so she stepped back a little. (In reality it was Chryssa and Fulvi laughing and shaking the straw.)

“Children!”—

“Well,” said Sybil after another pause, “you needn’t come if you don’t want to! I know you’re here.”

“Peep!” cried out both the young ones together.

“What silly children!” said Sybil, looking about for mice. “Here—Miss Flint was baking cakes, and I brought you out some.”

Which of course brought the children out, at once, for people who go in the barn and cut straw always get hungry.

The next thing after cutting the straws, was to know what to do with them; but that was soon found out. Mrs. Rutherford said she would teach them how to braid the straw, and then if they chose they might sew the braid together and make themselves hats. This seemed a splendid plan, and Chryssa at once determined to make a hat for her grandfather, and asked him if she might; and Mr. Ruthven not only said yes, but declared that he should enjoy such a hat very much, and that he was really quite in want of a new one, to wear when he went into the field. So Chryssa and Fulvi set to work, and bundles of straw, and straw braids, were the only things talked of for a while. Sometimes they sat out under the trees to braid, holding long confidential talks about their dolls the while; sometimes seated in front of the blazing wood fire they worked away by its light. But as one great thing often suggests another, thus it happened with the straws; for when Chryssa had braided a foot or two, and rolled it up to be out of her way, the roll looked so

pretty and so like a little straw mat, that she at once perceived it would be an excellent thing for Dolly to wipe her feet on. The hats were therefore laid by for the present, and mats became the order of the day. Then it seemed wise, as they were making mats, to make a good many and open a store,—and then of course the store must have something else in it.

What a series of manufactures was thereupon called forth!—straw mats, then straw brooms, then a little bit of old tin was cut and bent into the form of a dust pan; then Chryssa got a bit of stick for the handle of a brush, and having with great labour made half a dozen holes in it at one end, she glued three or four pine leaves into each hole for the bristles. Then she and Fulvi went down to the meadow and gathered rushes, and platted them into sword belts, and wove them into grenadier caps, and peeled them for rush lights; though this last was a difficult matter, and they wondered very much how the children in the story of “The Orphans” had managed. Then they gathered milkweed pods, and took out

the silk very carefully and dried it in the sun; but do all they could, it would break when they twisted it, and could be sold only in skeins — as raw silk.

Then Chryssa with a good deal of trouble made a little straw ladder, with two long straws for the sides and little short straws let in for the rungs, — and then she made a straw rake, with split straws for teeth. And these two new manufactures were really very pretty, though not of a sort to be extremely useful. The dust pan and brush were useful however, for one day when Miss Flint had been cutting bread, and left crumbs on the table, Chryssa fell to work, and really got quite a number of the crumbs into the pan with the little pine brush. At which Mr. Ruthven was very much amused.

It next occurred to the little storekeepers, that though they had no gourds to make little pails of, yet perhaps cucumbers would do just as well; and many a fat yellow cucumber was saved from the pigs, cut open, emptied, and left to dry. But that was as bad as the rushlights,

for instead of being smooth and round and hard, the new pails shrivelled up, would not hold water, and were by no means pleasant in point of perfume.

Then a flock of sheep seemed desirable—(for this was a true country store, and would hold any thing) but it was a hard idea to work out,—till they bethought themselves of the ripe purple beans in the garden, and then, with Mr. Ruthven's leave, they had sheep enough. In some of the pods too, there were sickly looking little half grown beans, that kept their whitish colour, and these answered admirably for lambs. It is true the mutton was not of first quality for eating, but Chryssa and Fulvi having other mutton in the house, cared little for that. Indeed they sometimes tried to eat their own, but the attempt generally ended in a wry face; nor was it much better when roasted on the end of a pin, before the oven mouth or over the candle.

Then they gathered bunches of herbs, especially pennyroyal; which as it grew wild every

where, was easy for them to get but not likely to be bought by other people. Then they picked the little seeds of the mallows, and kept them for cheeses. And suddenly it occurred to them both one day, that they might sell feathers too!

What a bright idea!

Down went the bundles of straw, unfinished mats, ladders, and brooms, and off started the children on a full run for that region of wonders, the barn. Under one of the sheds the chickens were accustomed to roost, and moreover they often dropped a feather there on the way to and from their nests; therefore the assortment was quite large. Stiff brown wing feathers, that might almost be used for quills, and little soft downy white feathers, that were admirable for a doll's bonnet. Then the long greenish-black tail feathers of the old cock were handsome enough to be sold by themselves, without being good for anything, and an occasional contribution from the peacock was worth any price——it would bring! Chryssa and Fulvi laid down the just law that each should have all she found, then gathered

and carried off their prizes; and from that day the first thing after breakfast was always to run down and look for feathers—which for greater safe keeping, and security against large brooms and dustpans, were not carried to the house, but stowed away in an old red sleigh at the barn.

Meanwhile, the weather was warm,—and a new amusement came up. This was to bathe in the brook. The brook was so clear and cool and beautiful, and the little fishes seemed to enjoy themselves in it so much, that the children thought they should enjoy themselves too, and wanted very much to try. In one part of the meadow the brook jumped and tumbled down a pile of rocks ten feet high, and there Mr. Ruthven used to bathe, under the fall, but it was too great a rush for the children. So he had some boards brought down from the sawmill, and a little shed made over one bend of the brook, just where a great maple grew and flung its pretty shadow over the little fish. This was only just finished, and on that very day when Chryssa and Fulvi began to hunt for feathers, they were to bathe in the brook for the first time.


It was great fun!—all the more that they felt a little afraid; and very laughing and excited they ran down to the little gate and crossed the road and climbed the fence like two squirrels, while Mrs. Rutherford and Mrs. Lee came slowly after them with the towels, and Sybil stood and watched them from the front door. Sybil was always rather suspicious of frolics.

The little bathing house cast quite a shade upon the water, and the fish looked really black as they darted to and fro; but the water was bright and clear, and rippled down over the shining pebbles with a very sweet sound. The long grass at the edge bent over and went with the stream as far as it could, and the flowers waved their heads softly at such wild proceedings.

Chryssa and Fulvi certainly did feel afraid at first to venture in among the little fish, though the water was so clear that they could see every stone at the bottom; but when they were once in they forgot everything but the fun. Indeed I think the fish were frightened

then, and rushed away. But how the children splashed! and ran up and down, and danced, and jumped about! It was no wonder the two ladies laughed,—but they soon began to think they should never get the children out again—the brook was so fascinating. And when they did come out they were not a bit tired, but with wet hair and happy faces, took a race to the house to see who should get there first.

CHAPTER XV.

 SAD accident happened one day—for Chryssa—running about the garret a little too heedlessly; beheaded her doll!—by setting her little foot right down upon that young lady's neck—which of course broke at once. Because it is a well known fact, that dolls were not made to be stepped on, any more than people. So there lay the doll's head—and her body!

Of course, that being the state of the case, the doll made no remark,—neither did the children at first, but looked at each other in astonishment. But though they both felt dismayed and sorry, yet the whole thing seemed so funny that they presently began to laugh; and perhaps the doll had never given them *such* a laugh, even in her most flourishing state of health and spirits. The next thing was, to repair damages. Not the damage done to the doll, for clearly *that* could not be repaired, but it was needful at once to find another doll of some sort.

Down stairs went the children and began the search.

Now there were no more dolls in the house. Miss Flint said she would make them a new doll, if they would wait till she had time; but the children did not want to wait at all, and knew very well that Miss Flint's time was as hard to find as a doll, so they made one up for themselves. Or indeed they called it a baby—not a doll,—it was much too large and dignified for that name. They took a small pillow, and tied a string round it near one end to make the head—a very square cornered head it was; then they tied on a little frock that belonged to Mrs. Lee's baby, and over that one of her aprons; and then pulled on a cap over the square corners of the head to keep them down. It must be said that this new baby had not very marked features, and that the white pillow case gave her a decidedly pale complexion; but then she had on a real dress, and her head could not be broken—which made some amends for its want of shape. Moreover, as there were plenty of pillows and little dresses, Fulvi

made up a "baby" for herself—so they each had one. But this made the garret deserted for a while,—of course such very real babies could only be played with down stairs, in real bedrooms, and put to sleep in real beds. Fulvi's little cradle would have held only one foot of such a doll—if the doll had had any feet.

By the time this great business was settled and disposed of, dinner came, and after that it was quite needful to go out and see how the sun shone.

"Let's take my tin things," said Chryssa, "and keep house!"—with which bright idea the children were both much elated.

Down near the barn, where some young trees grew together in a bushy sort of way, was a pile of boards; the shadow of the young trees falling over it like a curtain, and a fresh grass carpet all around. Here Chryssa and Fulvi began to keep house, out of doors,—to the very top board they carried the box of tin things, a piece of bread, a mug of water, an apple or two, and a great variety of raw beans. Here they laid

little sticks, making a splendid fire that was never lit; here they filled little tin kettles with water, and hung them over the fire which did not burn; and put bits of real bread upon tin and leaf dishes. Here they talked away countless and uncounted minutes, telling their housekeeping experience, laying plans for improvement, and exchanging (confidential) remarks as to the want of excellence in raw beans.

"It's strange they don't taste good," said Fulvi, — "they *look* pretty."

"If we could only make a fire and cook 'em really!" said Chryssa, splitting the skin of another bean with a pin point, and resolutely trying a bit of the inside. But she made such a face at it that both the young ones went into a fit of laughter.

"I think it tastes worse and worse!" said Chryssa, shaking her merry head about. "Do you s'pose we'll ever like 'em, Fulvi? — when we get used to 'em?"

"I don't know!" said Fulvi. "Do you think that kettle will ever boil, Chryssa?"

"I guess it's boiled as much as it ever will,"

said Chryssa, lifting off the heavy tin kettle, which was full an inch deep. "But I don't think the mutton's very good, Mrs. Green—shall I give you a piece of bread?"

How the yellow birds started on the thistle stalks! how the phœbe looked out from under the bridge!—such a laugh that pile of boards had not heard for one while.

"Why what makes you call me Mrs. Green?" said Fulvi when she could speak.

"O people always call people things," said Chryssa—"when they come to dinner. I'm Mrs. Brown."

"My dear Mrs. Brown!" said Fulvi, laying hold of Chryssa's hand, "how delighted I am to see you!"

"And so am I to see you," said Chryssa bowing politely. "How's Mr. Green and all the children?"

"I don't know where Mr. Green is," said Fulvi. "The children are all at home in bed."

"Well so are mine," said Chryssa, "only one of 'em had her head broke off this morning."

"Why you astonish me!" said Fulvi. "What did you do?"

"I didn't do any thing," said Chryssa. "I couldn't, you know. Fulvi—let's get some birch bark and make little boxes and baskets to put in our store!"

Down they jumped from the pile of boards, and away into the chip yard, looking for the pieces of bark which Aaron scattered about when he was cutting wood. There were a great many of them, little and big,—sweet-smelling things, all brown on one side and brown-spotted white on the other, and curled up like a roll of thin paste-board. They could be split too, into thinner and thinner pieces, and were so soft and pliable that they could be cut and sewed in all manner of shapes. The great difficulty was to hide the stitches, and now and then one would tear out, but still the new manufactures were very interesting.

It was a cool evening, and Miss Flint made up a great wood fire which shone round the old kitchen far better than gas, and then she brought out

her great wheel and began to spin; the wheel whirring and flying round, and the soft white rolls changing to fine twisted white yarn, with great speed. The room and the fire and the spinning were so pleasant, that all the family came together to enjoy them; and Chryssa and Fulvi sat down in one corner of the hearth, and worked away in the firelight, making birch bark baskets.

"If you were only two Indians," said Sybil, "then you could embroider your things with porcupine quills."

"And if I was only poor and sick," said Mrs. Rutherford, "you could help take care of me."

"With the baskets?" said Chryssa looking up.

"Shall I tell you a story of what a little girl might do?" said her aunt.

"O yes," said Chryssa. "What was her name?"

Mrs. Rutherford smiled and began.

"Little May Hunt lived all alone with her mother and her little brother Tiny. Tiny was very small, and could do nothing but run about, and eat bread and milk, and tangle Mrs. Hunt's

ball of yarn, and pull off May's flowers. For May had two flowers—a ladyslipper and a marigold—growing in two cracked mugs. The house where they all lived, was quite out of the village, at one end, and so small that it looked like a cast-off room from some other house. Every day Mrs. Hunt went down into the village to take home sewing that she had done, or to get some more; and when nobody had any for her she knit stockings instead. How fast her needles did fly! whatever she was about; but the stockings were not for May nor Tiny,—Mrs. Hunt sold them all. It was warm weather though, so they never had cold feet; but May thought she should like to see Tiny wear little white stockings and red shoes, like a little boy who lived in the biggest house in the village—as Tiny lived in the smallest.

“‘How much do red shoes cost, mother?’” she said one day.

“‘More than I can afford to give,’ said her mother. ‘And Tiny is in much more need of a straw hat.’ And Mrs. Hunt stroked Tiny's hair,

and looked at his face which was getting brown enough.

“‘I wish I could help you, mother.’

“‘O you do help me, a great deal,’ said Mrs. Hunt smiling at her. ‘You take such good care of Tiny. And ever since you began to try to be good, and to serve God, I don’t feel as if I wanted any more help.’

“‘I don’t do much!’ said May shaking her head, and winking her eyes to keep the tears back. ‘Mother, I don’t think Tiny has quite enough milk. That little tin cup don’t hold much.’

“‘I know it,’ — said Mrs. Hunt, and she looked very grave for a minute. ‘But I’ve told our Heavenly Father all that we want, May, — so we need not feel uneasy.’

“‘Mother,’ said May thoughtfully, ‘that’s just what puzzles me.’

“‘What?’ said her mother.

“‘Why God knew before, didn’t he? — and now you’ve told him again.’

“‘Yes, he knew it before,’ said Mrs. Hunt, ‘but he chooses still to have his children tell him

all they want. And whatever is best for them they shall have.'

" 'And they may try to get it, too?' said May.

" 'Of course — asking God to guide and help them.'

" 'Mother,' said May, 'if *I* could make things, Tiny could have more milk. I have asked God to help me, for a good while, but I can't think of any thing. Do you think God isn't willing?'

" Mrs. Hunt was silent a minute, for it was not very easy to speak.

" 'No, May,' she said softly, 'I don't think that. But perhaps he is teaching you and me patience — so we must try and learn.'

" 'Yes mother,' said May, looking thoughtfully at a warm sunbeam that lay on the floor. 'Mother! who makes all the straw hats the boys wear?'

" 'I don't know,' said Mrs. Hunt, — 'the women make them in some towns, and the girls.'

" 'Then I'll learn!' said May resolutely. 'I can braid three now, and I can sew the braids together. That would do for Tiny, anyway.'

And Chryssa and Fulvi nodded to each other, thinking of their own rolls of straw braid.

“‘But May — where will you get straw?’ said Mrs. Hunt.

“‘Maybe some of the farmers’ll give me some, mother. And if they won’t I’ll take some of that stiff grass that grows by the brook. I’ll try!’

“So she did. She tried the grass first of all, for she could have that without asking; but though it made a pretty braid it was not very strong. Then she went into the field one day where Farmer Flax was at work with his men, and asked if she might have some of the loose straws that were left scattered about the field.

“Farmer Flax tied up the bundle of grain he had in his hands, and then he looked at May.

“‘Do you know there’s oats on every single straw that lies round?’ he said. ‘I s’pose you want ’em to feed your chickens.’

“‘O no sir!’ said May eagerly. ‘I don’t want the oats at all — only the straw. I’ll bring a scissors and cut the oats off and leave ’em here. I want the straw to make Tiny a hat.’

“‘Whew!’ said Farmer Flax, — ‘that’s a wind I don’t see more’n once a year! Well child, why don’t you buy one?’

“‘Mother can’t, sir.’

“‘Well how’d you like to *sell* one?’ said the farmer looking at her.

“‘O dearly!’ said May — ‘if I could make it well enough.’

“‘I’ll tell you what you’ll do,’ said Farmer Flax. ‘You’ll come here and pick up the straws, and make ’em up somehow — no matter *just* how, and you’ll let *me* have the hat, and Tiny can wait. What does he want one for? He can’t have one till I’ve had six — d’ye hear? And you needn’t cut off the oats — take ’em home to your chickens. I guess my pigs won’t miss ’em. Now child — don’t interrupt me any more.’

“May didn’t try to interrupt the farmer, nor even to answer him. She stood still with her eyes full of tears, thinking of all the milk the six hats would buy for Tiny. But then she said very softly,

“‘We haven’t got any chickens sir, so I’d rather leave the oats for the *mares*’

“‘All a mistake!’ said Farmer Flax gathering up the grain. ‘No chickens?—then you ought to have—I’ll fetch you one next time I come your way. Now May Hunt—don’t give us a shower in harvest!—pick up your straws, and run home and tell Tiny he can’t have a hat this great while.’

“Which May did—the first part of it, but she only told Tiny that some time he *should* have a hat. And how she worked at her braiding and sewing! and how rough the first hat was, and how much better the second, and how good the milk that she bought for Tiny! And as for the little cock and hen that Farmer Flax gave her, there probably never were seen such chickens, before nor since.

“‘I think, mother,’ she said, when the sixth hat was finished and she had orders to make six more, ‘I think if God meant to teach me patience, he meant to teach me perseverance too.’”

“Aunt Esther!” said Chryssa the moment Mrs. Rutherford stopped speaking, “do you s’pose I could do that if you were poor?”

"I have no doubt of it," said her aunt smiling.

Chryssa made no further remark, but for some days thereafter she worked at her roll of straw braid, as if she thought Mrs. Rutherford in immediate danger of losing all other means of support but Chryssa's own little fingers.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE last day of Fulvi's stay at Hard Maple was a busy one. There were apples to get from the little orchard, there were the threshers to see in the big barn, there was a long drive to take in the afternoon. Miss Flint said if they chose to take their dinner into the orchard with them, she would give them what she called "a real good tea;" and of course the children thought dinner under the apple trees would be better than anywhere else. But first Mr. Ruthven took them down to the barn.

The lower barn floor was heaped up on either side with sheaves of wheat and rye, but in the middle it was quite clear and one of the men was even sweeping it. A great wooden shovel lay on the floor, and a pitchfork, and the wooden flails leaned up against one of the timbers. At the further end stood a queer looking red machine, but what it could do—or was going to do—the children did not know.

The man put down his broom, and Aaron threw down some sheaves of wheat on the floor, spreading them out from side to side, and then both took up the flails. The flails were more like great wooden whips than anything, the lash being a thick oak stick like the handle. Then flourishing the flail over his head, Aaron brought the wooden lash down upon the wheat sheaves till the barn floor rang again, and the minute he raised it the other man brought down his; and so they went on, beating out the grain. Then Aaron took the pitchfork and pulled away the loose straw, and under it was the wheat, lying thick on the floor. But there was a good deal of chaff mixed with it yet, so the men rolled up the red machine, and Mr. Ruthven said it was called a fanning mill, and was used to clear and blow away all the chaff so as to have the wheat quite clean. Then the wooden shovel came into play. Aaron took up a shovelful of wheat and poured it into the top of the fanning mill, and the other man turned the handle at one side; and the mill shook the wheat about, and fanned it, and

blew off the chaff, and poured the clean grain down in a great heap on the floor. Then when it was all winnowed—as Mr. Ruthven called it, Aaron threw down more sheaves on the floor and the threshing began again. Meantime the chickens gathered about the great wide open door, picking up the grains of wheat that lay scattered about, some swept off the floor and some dashed out by the busy flails.

And now it was time to go to the little orchard. The day was most fair and cool, the sky bright blue, and the sweet fall wind told all sorts of sweet stories about grain fields and orchards and ripening nuts. Miss Flint packed up a fine dinner basket and prepared a tin pail of milk, and then all the children set forth, each with some particular little basket for apples. Fast enough they went on through the meadow, while Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Rutherford and Miss Flint herself came after.

Down the hill by the barn, where the flails were beating time and wheat; through the barn meadow, and across the meadow stream, and under

the great butternut trees ; through the little meadow, so gay with yarrow and golden rod, and the long meadow where egg plums grew by the fence, and then into the little orchard. Not all the apples were ripe yet ; but to one tree Miss Flint went to gather for pies, and to another and another the ladies led the children. Some apples lay on the ground, bedded in the grass, their red cheeks sunburnt and glowing ; and some hung drooping down from the branches, almost or quite within reach ; but the most were far up in the tree, and could only be shaken or knocked down. How hard the children tried to shake the tree ! clasping the rough bark with their little fingers, — how good-naturedly the old apple trees let them try — and did not even shake their heads ! And how when Miss Flint took hold, the apples came hurrying down in a hard shower — as if they felt the necessity of their being made up into pies at once ! But when all the baskets were full, the next thing was to attend to the pies that *were* made. For there was plenty of apple pie in the dinner basket, and other pie made of dried raspberries, and





baked in a straight edged tin pan with almost no crust. And there was cheese, and cookies, and cold meat and bread; and there was sweet yellow milk in the tin pail, and excellent appetites every where!—even among the little brown sparrows that came and picked up the crumbs. About one of these Mrs. Rutherford told the children a story.

Little Song Sparrow had under her breast
Five little eggs in a woven nest.
The nest was woven of twigs and hay,
Some fibrous roots that came in her way,
A long black hair from a horse's tail,
A thread of yarn from a garden pale;
While feathers within and moss without,
Kept every breath of the cold air out.

The five little eggs looked very well,
For each little egg had a speckled shell;
The ground was white and the speckles brown;
And when the little Song Sparrow came down
From high in air to sit on the eggs,
Tucking them under her slender legs,—
She thought to herself, "There cannot be
Five prettier eggs than belong to me!"

So there she staid for a week or two,
Warm with the sun and wet with the dew;
Tired of living at home no doubt,
Yet not for a crumb would she venture out.

Her mate meanwhile, went back and forth,
Seeking provisions south and north,
And sometimes resting his busy wing,
To let Mrs. Sparrow hear him sing.

At length one day, when the sky was fair,
And flowers with perfume filled the air;
When the breeze blew softly to and fro,
And the birds skimmed over, high and low;
Mrs. Song Sparrow felt under her wings
Five little moving, hungry things;
For every shell was broken in two,
And five little sparrows had all come through!

What searching was then for worm and seed,
With five little open mouths to feed!
Five little mouths, that would eat and cry
From early dawn till the evening sky.
No wonder Mrs. Song Sparrow looked out
For crumbs the children scattered about,—
And nobody ought to call it theft
If she took the meal the chickens had left.

Perhaps she was tired, and sleepy too,
When the sun went down, and the drops of dew
Lay like jewels on grass and tree—
Bright as her own little eyes could be.
But when at last she had gone to rest,
Hiding her young ones under her breast;
The wind might blow or the rain might fall,
The nestful of birds slept on through all.

The five little sparrows grew and grew,
And soon little feathers came into view,

All over their heads and backs and wings,
So they were no longer downy things.
Their appetites grew; and so did they —
Stronger and stronger from day to day;
And much they wanted to quit the tree,
And see what else in the world might be.

It seemed too bad to be shut up there,
While other birds winged through the air, —
So green was the earth, so blue the sky,
That each one felt as if he should fly!
How they twittered and chirped and looked about! —
Their little soft heads just peeping out, —
Their little bright eyes peered over the nest,
And not a sparrow could be at rest.

But when their mother bid them try —
Cheering them on with her soft glad eye;
Fluttering on before them, to show
The very way that a sparrow should go;
Chirping herself in a sweet low tone,
That they might not think they were left alone.
Who knows with what joy and fear that day,
The five little sparrows flew away!

“But what were they afraid of?” said Chryssa,
who had been softly taking the crumbs from her
apron and throwing them into the grass for a real
little song sparrow.

“They had never used their wings before.”

“Well I should think it might have felt good

—after being shut up in a nest so long,” said Chryssa. “I wonder what makes the old cat watch the birds so? I wish she wouldn’t.”

But as that, according to Sybil, “couldn’t be helped,” the children jumped up and ran races in the orchard, and picked flowers, and made a wreath for the baby’s little bonnet, after which they all went home.

The ride in the afternoon was beautiful. To be sure, they were stowed pretty close in the wagon, but who minded that?—not Chryssa and Fulvi; who were as full of glee as any little song sparrow that ever wore a feather coat. Sometimes they looked out at the woods and flowers and fences, sometimes putting their heads together they talked mysterious things about the great pillow dolls at home. Then in the trees by the roadside were frost grapes—the vines twisting and twining about, showing their yellow leaves here and there, while the bunches of little purple grapes hung thick and clustering. Then the wagon stopped and the whole party got out,—the children to run races on the shady road, and pick up

acorns and gather flowers; the two ladies to pick frost grapes; but as these were decided to be "not good for children," the young ones contented themselves with looking at the pretty fruit, and wondering how it could be bad for them, and yet so good for Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Rutherford! But after all acorns and snail shells were better—if they could have but the one, and Miss Flint's "real good tea" made amends for every thing.

The next day Mrs. Lee and Fulvi and the baby went away, and Chryssa was left to amuse herself once more. It was a sad thing to undress the pillow dolls, and see their clothes packed up for the journey. Chryssa knew she should not want to play with them all by herself, so it made less matter; but she was sorry to have Fulvi go, and the two wandered about together all the morning,—picking up the last feathers and birch bark, and storing them away till "next time." And about midday the stage came, and they all drove off.

Chryssa felt very lonely then. She went wandering about to all the old places, but they were

sorrowful company. A stray feather lay here and there round the barnyard, but she did not want to pick them up; and though the pennyroyal on the hill was just as sweet as ever, she did not gather a single sprig. Down in the barn meadow was the bed of a brook, which early in the spring was quite full of water but now was dry, and there was only a little pool now and then. Across from side to side at one of the deep places was a little plank bridge, and here Chryssa and Fulvi used to run back and forth till they were tired, but Chryssa only stood still and looked at it now,— she did not even jump across once. Then she went back to the barn, and walked about under the sheds and outhouses; and the old bulfrog who lived in the barnyard while the brook was dry, sat up in one corner as usual,— an immense green fellow, with shining body and legs and great staring eyes. How he stared at Chryssa now — and then said “Ca-chunk!” Which might mean several things — but Chryssa never answered a word. She and Fulvi had talked to him a great deal, other days, but now she did not want to speak. As a

last means of consolation, Chryssa went back to the house and got the old cat, and with puss in her lap and all the kittens but one running over her, Chryssa felt comforted. But the grey kitten would not come, and sat under a gooseberry bush just as wild as ever.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRYSSA," said Mrs. Rutherford one morning, "how would you like to go to the sewing society with Miss Flint this afternoon?"

"Why I should like it very much," said Chryssa with a grave face; "but you know, Aunt Esther, I can't sew very fast."

"I don't think they will expect you to do much," said Mrs. Rutherford smiling. "Miss Flint says you may go and look on."

"But mayn't I have some work too?" said Chryssa. "Because it wouldn't be much use for me to go if I didn't sew."

"O yes, you may have some work," said her aunt. "I dare say the ladies down there will give you a pincushion to make, or a little bag, and you can take your thimble in your pocket. I mean to let you ride down."

"In the wagon?" said Chryssa;—"is grandpa going?"

"No, not in the wagon; I'm going to let you ride down on horseback."

"On horseback!" cried Chryssa. "But Aunt Esther, I never was on a horse."

"You won't be afraid, will you?" said Mrs. Rutherford smiling. "Miss Flint will walk by your side."

"Why couldn't I walk too?" said Chryssa.

"It's too far."

"O Chryssa!" said Sybil, "I wouldn't be afraid if I were you."

"Well you're older than I am," said Chryssa. "But I'm not afraid—I mean I don't want to be." And when she had thought about it a little more, Chryssa determined that she *wouldn't* be.

And she held to her determination very bravely. Yet I must confess, that when she heard Mr. Ruthven tell Aaron to take the bridle and a pan of salt, and go to the pasture and catch the old brown horse; and when she saw Aaron actually walking off with the bridle on his arm; then Chryssa did feel her heart beat a little faster than was quite pleasant. But if she had been fright-

ened to death she would not have given up then; for when Chryssa once made up her mind to do a thing, that thing was always done.

It was a little help to her mind and her heart too, that she had to go up stairs and get dressed; and the new little shoes, and white stockings and white frock, had quite a quieting effect. Then Chryssa felt quite important as she tied up her thimble in the corner of her handkerchief (lest the old horse should trot it out of her pocket); and moreover — she did once in a while think to herself, “Perhaps Aaron won’t find the old horse in time!”

But just as Mrs. Rutherford was tying a dark blue sash round the little belt of the white frock, Sybil (who was watching at the window) cried out,

“Here comes Aaron and the old horse! — you’ll have to go, Chryssie!”

“Well” — said Chryssa, wishing very much that her heart wouldn’t jump about so, — “I’m almost ready;” and when her sash was tied she put on her little white sunbonnet and followed Mrs. Rutherford down stairs.

The old horse stood at the little chip-yard gate, tied fast to a plum tree, and Aaron was buckling on the sidesaddle under Miss Flint's directions. Miss Flint was all ready herself, and meant to have the old horse all ready in no time.

"O you'll want a whip, Chryssie," said Sybil.

"No I don't think I shall," said Chryssa.



But Mrs. Rutherford said she had better have one, and Mr. Rutherford went down into the meadow and cut a long slender bit of Indian

willow, and twisted one end of it into a little ring, so that Chryssa could hold it nicely in her hand. Then he took the bridle and led the old horse close to the great horseblock, and Mrs. Rutherford lifted Chryssa up and set her fairly in the saddle. Chryssa felt as if she were up on top of the house!—she could hardly draw her breath for a minute. And when the old horse shook off a fly that was on his nose, and tossed his mane, and snorted,—Chryssa didn't know but he meant to toss her up into the great apple tree that grew in the chip yard.

But Mrs. Rutherford put the bridle into one hand, and the little willow whip in the other, and Sybil charged her not to let the horse run away: and her uncle took hold of the bridle and said he would lead her down the hill, while Aaron ran before to open the gate. Then the old horse began to move.

O how strange it felt!—his great shoulders went up and down and sideways, and it seemed as if her little shoulders had to do the same,—as if she was twisting about in every di-

rection; and when they reached the gate, and Mr. Rutherford smiled and let go the bridle, and the old horse stepped gravely out into the road,—Chryssa could hardly have felt further from home if she had been up in a balloon.

“They’re all looking after you, Chryssa,” said Miss Flint as she came up alongside of the old horse. “Look round at ’em.”

“I’m afraid to—I can’t turn round,” said Chryssa.

“Why yes you can!” said Miss Flint,—“I’ll take care you don’t fall off.”

And very slowly and carefully Chryssa turned her head, and saw all the dear people in front of the house under the old trees. There were Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford, there was Sybil waving her handkerchief, there was old Mr. Ruthven on the steps,—Chryssa could see his white hair quite distinctly. She heaved a little bit of a sigh as she saw them all, but then turned her head round in a hurry; for the old horse began to walk off so fast, that Chryssa didn’t know but he was intending to gallop.

“Give him a switch and make him go Chryssa,” said Miss Flint.

“O I don’t want to go any faster,” said Chryssa.

“Nonsense!” said Miss Flint,—“you’re not going to let him walk all the way down there.” And she caught hold of the bridle, and calling out, “Come! Get up!” she began to run and the old horse began to trot; and so they went on for a few minutes till Chryssa was almost shaken to pieces. For the old horse had not a very easy trot, and his little rider didn’t know how to keep close to that big saddle, and so the trotting tossed her up and down like a ball.

“O please don’t make him trot any more!” said Chryssa, when Miss Flint stopped running, —“because I shall fall off.”

Miss Flint laughed, and said she would catch her, and they went on very quietly for some time. The smooth pretty road went up one little hill and down another, first by a patch of dark woods and then by a beautiful field of

young grain, and then by a meadow where sheep were feeding.

"Whose sheep are those?" said Chryssa.

"They're your grandpa's," said Miss Flint, — "all the fields clear down here are hisn, — then comes Squire Phil's land."

"What does grandpa have only one black sheep and all the rest white, for?" said Chryssa.

"There's always one black sheep in a flock," said Miss Flint, — "you don't hardly ever see two. Come, old horse, get up!"

And Miss Flint picked up a little stick that lay in the road, and gave the old horse such a sharp stroke with it, that he set off at a pace the like of which Chryssa had never felt before. She seemed to be flying backwards and forwards through the air, as if two people had been playing battledoor with her — only she didn't turn round in the air every time, as the shuttlecock did; but just as she was wondering what *would* become of her now (for she couldn't see Miss Flint at her side any longer) the old horse stopped of his own accord, and began to

walk again. Then Miss Flint came up, running and laughing and out of breath.

"How did you like that?" she said.

"What *was* he doing?" said Chryssa.

"Why nothing in the world but cantering," said Miss Flint.

"Was that cantering?" said Chryssa, feeling surprised and a little proud too—to have had her horse canter and yet not fall off!

"To be sure," said Miss Flint. "How did you like it?"

"I think I should like it very much if I didn't jump about so," she said. "But I like walking better."

"So do I," — said Miss Flint, — "I had to run like a kitten to catch up with you. I shan't make him canter much—you needn't be afraid."

But Miss Flint did make him trot,—every little while she would lay hold of the bridle and give the old horse and herself a good run. And as Chryssa got more used to it, it was almost as much fun to her as to Miss Flint.

Now they began to pass a few houses, one at

a time, — some painted white and some yellow, and some not painted at all. There were gay flowers around the front doors and in the front windows, and everybody seemed very busy making garden, and in the fields there were men ploughing. Once or twice a little brook ran across the road, and over it there was a little wooden bridge upon which the old horse's feet made a great clatter; but Chryssa was the only one who took any notice of it. And now and then a flock of geese or an old turkey cock would come out, and scream and gobble as if they could on no account let Chryssa go any further. But the old horse walked on as steadily as if there had been no such thing as geese or turkeys in the world; and Chryssa thought it was quite grand to be up there on his back, out of their way.

“Now we're almost there,” said Miss Flint. “Here's where one of the ladies lives that you'll see at the Society, — and here's another. And there's the church, and there's the school-house 'way down beyond.”

The first house had a very gay garden, and on the steps lay a great tawny-coloured dog, pretending to be fast asleep; but really he was watching Chryssa, to see what she and the old horse meant to do.

Then came the church, with its square white tower, and green blinds, and white fence; and then another house almost hidden by trees, and then the clergyman's house.

The schoolhouse was very white and square, with no trees about it; but Miss Flint did not stop there. On she went, taking hold of the bridle whenever the road branched off, to make sure the old horse went the right way, till they came to a large, long, red house, with a tall pole before it, and a sign swinging from the pole. A sort of piazza ran round the second story of the house, and there were several horses and wagons standing about, and several men on the steps.

"Here we are," said Miss Flint, and she led the old horse up to the horseblock, and took Chryssa down. And Chryssa could hardly stand

ap at first—she had been so long perched up in the saddle.

Then Miss Flint called one of the men to take care of the horse, and she went in through the open door, and up stairs to the room that had the piazza round it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE room where the sewing society met, was the largest in the house — and that was about all that could be said in its favour. It was long enough, and had windows enough, but the ceiling was low and the windows had no blinds; and the walls were covered with purple-coloured paper, spotted all over with yellow spots that looked as if they were meant for the rising sun. Here and there too, the damp weather — not admiring the paper — had rubbed it with wet fingers, and made long dingy streaks upon the gay purple. A great many rush-bottomed chairs stood up against the wall, and a mahogany table with a looking glass over it stood between two of the windows. Opposite this table was another, holding a square glass case that looked like a sort of little milliner's shop. For in it were babies' caps and socks, one little hood, six needlebooks, nine bags, five aprons, and fourteen pincushions; be-

sides emery bags, scissors cases, and kettle holders.

The Society sat in the chairs at the furthest end of the room, and Chryssa had time to stop and look at the wonderful glass case, and to ask Miss Flint what it was.

“Why it’s Society work, child,” said Miss Flint, — “all that isn’t bought they put in here.” And she shewed Chryssa the printed card at the top, which said that all the articles in the glass case might be had for money.

“O I know,” said Chryssa, — “there was just such a box at the place where we stopped for the horses to rest, when we were coming here.”

Miss Flint then walked on into the very midst of the Society, and all of them received Chryssa very kindly. Some of the younger ones kissed her, and others looked at the way her frock was made and said they should like to have the pattern — it would be so pretty to make for the Society. Then Miss Flint said Chryssa must have some work; and one of the ladies cut out a square piece of blue satin and a square piece

of yellow satin, and told Chryssa she might sew them together to make a little bag.

So Chryssa sat down (or rather sat up) in one of the rush bottomed chairs by the window, and took out her thimble and began to sew. It was very easy to put the needle through that soft satin, but Chryssa was so afraid her bag would not look well enough to hang up in the glass case, that she sewed as slowly and carefully as if it had been some stiff stuff that had a mind to break her needle. Now and then the ladies asked her a question, and she answered "Yes ma'am" and "No ma'am," in the gravest way possible. The rest of the time she listened to the talk that went on around her, but she couldn't understand much of it. Sometimes one of the ladies held up a pretty piece of work to be admired—an emery bag in the form of a shoe, or a pen wiper made like an old woman with a red cloak; and then Chryssa stopped sewing and looked too. At length when the bag was sewed up and hemmed, and the shir run at the top, the lady found a blue ribband and a yellow ribband

and gave them to Chryssa to run in the bag for strings. And the great piece of work was done! and well done too, the ladies said, though Chryssa herself would have liked the bag much better if it had been all blue or all yellow. However, people could not look at both sides at once, that was one comfort.

By this time it grew late in the afternoon, and everybody stopped work; and then some of the younger ones began to mark all the things that had been finished; that is, they wrote on bits of paper the prices they should bring, and pinned the papers fast to all the different articles.

"How much shall this be?" said one girl, taking up Chryssa's bag. "Sixpence?"

"O I think that ought to bring a shilling," said another. So a bit of paper marked "one shilling" was fastened to the bag, and the bag was hung up in the glass case.

Then the Society put on bonnets and went away, and one lady insisted that Chryssa and Miss Flint should go home with her to tea; and they walked along, leading the old horse behind

them, till they came to the house where the tawny dog lay on the doorstep.

How many pretty things were there to Chryssa's eyes! — the bright flowers in the garden, — marigolds, and lady's slipper, and prince's feather, and brilliant bunches of red cranberries; — and within the house there was such a sweet smell of apples. But most of all was she attracted by three soft white balls, as large as a big apple, which hung over the looking glass. And when she was told that they were thistle balls, and that if she took the thistle heads when the seed was ripe, and did so and so with them, and hung them up to dry, she could have just such balls, Chryssa was both surprised and delighted.

Then they had tea, with all sorts of nice things; and an old lady in the house brought out some jelly made of the bright red cranberries, and made her taste it — which Chryssa thought was very kind, as she was such a little girl. And then Miss Flint said it was time to go.

But here came a little disappointment to Chryssa, for her friends insisted that they would take her home in the wagon, and all she could say was to no purpose. It wouldn't take long to get the wagon ready, they said, and it wasn't a bit of trouble, and they would like the ride; — and Chryssa thought it would not be very polite to say that she would much rather ride the old horse than to go with them in the wagon. So quite sorrowfully and very silently she let them wrap her up in a warm shawl and put her in the wagon, while Miss Flint mounted the old horse; and they set off in the starlight, Chryssa with one of the thistle balls to take home.

It was a very beautiful night, — the stars shone bright and clear, and the woods looked almost black now the sun was gone. And Chryssa, sitting there on a buffalo robe, wrapped up in her shawl, would have enjoyed it very much if Miss Flint and the old horse had not been there beside her. But how Miss Flint did ride! — she cantered, and trotted, and cantered again;

she lingered behind the wagon, and dashed on before, and rode quite round it; and Chryssa could not help thinking all the time how much pleasanter that was, than even being slowly jolted over the road in a buffalo robe.

By and by she could see the lights shining from the windows of her grandfather's house, while the two great trees made one dark spot in front; and then she heard the dog bark — and then they drove up to the door and got out. Sybil met her in the porch, and asked all manner of questions about her ride and the Sewing Society, and admired the thistle ball, and then she said —

“Now Chryssa, guess what Uncle Ruth did for us after you went away.”

“Did he make us some little boats?” said Chryssa.

“O no! — guess again.”

Chryssa guessed and guessed, in vain; and then Sybil told her she must wait till morning and she should see.

“And so you enjoyed your ride, Chryssa,”

said Mrs. Rutherford when the children were going to bed.

“O yes indeed!” said Chryssa. “At least I enjoyed riding down.”

“And didn’t you enjoy riding up?”

“Yes” — said Chryssa, — “a little. But I’d rather have been on the old horse.”

“Why didn’t you say so then?” said Sybil, — “I would, in a minute.”

“They didn’t ask me which I’d rather do,” said Chryssa. “I s’pose they thought I *must* like riding with them best. And I didn’t like to tell ’em they were mistaken.”

“That’s right, Chryssie,” said Mrs. Rutherford smiling, — “always take care of other people’s feelings first.”

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Chryssa woke up next morning she could not think for a minute what it was that she wanted to see or do,—then she remembered what Sybil had said last night, and she took hold of her shoulder and shook her, and called out,

“Now Sybil!—shew me what Uncle Ruth did for us yesterday.”

“You’re in a great hurry,” said Sybil rubbing her eyes.

“Well shew me, won’t you?” said Chryssa. “Because I’ve waited a great while.”

“And waited patiently too,” said Mrs. Rutherford.

“Well you may shew yourself,” said Sybil,—“just go to the window and look out. No, no, child—the front window,—look under the elm tree.”

Chryssa went to the front window and looked

out, under the elm tree, and there she saw a beautiful swing! Mr. Rutherford had fastened two strong new ropes to a cross branch of the tree, far, far from the ground; and had put in a nice board seat, which was wide enough for Sybil and Chryssa to sit in together.

"It goes beautifully!" said Sybil. "Uncle Ruth swung me there last night, and I went ever so high. I shouldn't wonder if the birds thought I was coming up into the tree to pay them a visit."

"Well you can swing me and I can swing you," said Chryssa.

"Yes," said Sybil, "and I can swing myself a little, too: the seat isn't very high from the ground."

Chryssa began to dress herself as fast as she could, to go down and try it, when all of a sudden there was a sharp loud noise under the window.

"O!" cried Sybil,— "that was a gun! I wonder who fired it. Don't go near the window, Chryssie—you might get shot."

Chryssa kept away from the window, but as soon as she could she ran down stairs to the front door. There stood Mr. Ruthven leaning upon his gun, and looking up into the great tree.

"Why grandpa! was that you?" said Chryssa.

"Yes deary," he answered with a smile, "I shot one of those mischievous squirrels."

"Shot a *squirrel*!" cried Chryssa,— "you didn't *kill* it, grandpa?"

"Indeed I did," said Mr. Ruthven, "and the old cat has got it for her breakfast."

Chryssa ran round the house, and sure enough, there was Mrs. Tortoiseshell eating a red squirrel. But she probably thought Chryssa wanted it for *her* breakfast, for she began to growl at a great rate, and Chryssa ran back again.

"What made you kill it, grandpa?" she said.

"Little rascals!" replied Mr. Ruthven, "they eat my corn. I wish I could shoot every one of them."

It was so impossible for Chryssa to understand how anybody could like corn better than

squirrels, that she did not even ask another question, but went and sat down in the new swing and looked sorrowfully up into the tree. How strange it was!—she had seen her grandfather give the chickens corn when they were hungry, and send bread to a beggar—why must the squirrels either starve or be shot?

Suddenly Mr. Ruthven set down his gun in the porch, and coming behind Chryssa he told her to hold fast, and away she went—and the swing too, into the air. Up, up, towards the green leaves—every time Chryssa thought she should touch them with her feet; and far down below she could see the brook, rushing along after its old fashion. Mr. Ruthven shewed her a bird's nest, hung like a little basket from the end of one of the long elm branches; and she saw the birds flying about,—they were dressed in orange and black feathers, and Mr. Ruthven told her they were Baltimore orioles. Then Sybil came to the door and said breakfast was ready, and he stopped pushing the swing, and it went lower and lower, and slower and slower, till at last it stood quite still.

"Isn't it splendid?" said Sybil.

"O yes!" said Chryssa. "It's so beautiful to see the brook and the meadow."

"Yes, and the tree over your head. But come to breakfast, Chryssie, for we've got a great deal to do to-day. I've found a new place in the meadow—and do you know Uncle Ruth's going away? Some business, he says."

"I wish people needn't go away," said Chryssa as she went in,— "it's very disagreeable!"

Disagreeable or not, it must be done—as Sybil remarked; but everybody felt lonely again; and the children waved their handkerchiefs to the stage as long as it could be seen. Even the little cloud of dust it raised was watched, until the stage turned off behind a distant hill and the dust sunk down on the road again. Indeed I don't know how long Chryssa would have stood in the porch, though there was nothing more to be seen, but Sybil called her off.

"Come Chryssie," she said, "it's no use to stand there,—let's go down in the meadow."

Chryssa's eyes were full of tears, and she

drew one or two sighs that might have touched the heart of the stage-driver — if he could have heard them; but she knew it was “no use,” and she followed Sybil down into the meadow.

“The new place” was a sort of hermitage. Here and there in the smooth meadow was a great tree, and here and there a great rock too — standing in the midst of a clump of bushes. One of these rocks was quite flat, and looked like a little stone floor, and the bushes grew up like green walls all round it; but the roof was nothing but blue sky.

“See Chryssie,” said Sybil as she pushed aside the branches and stepped in, “this is a real little house. We might come and sit here and sew.”

“Well why can’t we sit here now?” said Chryssa, — “and you can tell me a story. That’ll be just as good as sewing.”

Sybil however chose to get her house in order first, so she went back for a broom and a knife, and while Chryssa industriously swept the flat stone, Sybil trimmed the bushes and cut off some branches that were too intrusive.

"It begins to look very nice, Chryssie," she said, "but to make it a *real* Hermitage we must get some snail shells and curious things to put in it."

No sooner said than done. Chryssa got a basket, and the two went up on the hill and began their search. Shells were not very plenty. Here and there a snail had obligingly left his on a bed of moss, but not always unbroken, and the acorn cups and white pebbles that could be found, though pretty, were not remarkable. The moss was beautiful!—so green and soft; or in little round tufts like pincushions, or wearing bright red caps; and the basket was soon full. And it was charming work to arrange the various things round the sides of the Hermitage floor, and to stick some bits of moss on the thorn bush walls.

"What a nice place this would be to live, if we were two lost children!" said Sybil. "Nothing could see us in here, the bushes are so thick, and we could eat the thorn berries and pennyroyal and butternuts."

"But we should have to go out to get everything but the thorn berries," said Chryssa.

“O yes —” said Sybil, — “people always do, you know, in such cases. They choose a good time and run out and pick up things. Just think how softly we should have to crack our nuts, for fear of being heard!”

“I don’t think I want to be lost,” said Chryssa, — “what should we do if it rained?”

“O we should get wet,” said Sybil. “At least I should, because I should put all my clothes over you.”

“Then I should be hot and you would be cold,” said Chryssa, — “so *that* wouldn’t be pleasant. There goes grandpa down the road! — I guess I’ll go too.”

“Well I want to go in and read,” said Sybil, “so you can do what you like;” and away ran Chryssa after Mr. Ruthven.

He never walked very fast, so her little pattering feet did not delay him with their short steps, and of course she did not interrupt him, for he was just as ready to talk of apples and pick flowers as she was. Mr. Ruthven’s hair was like winter snow and Chryssa’s like spring sun-

shine, and he walked with a stick, while she went about like a grasshopper, — but they were excellent companions, for all that.

The corn-pickers had done their work, or the first part of it, and now they were filling the cart with great yellow ears of corn, and the patient oxen stood waiting to draw it home. Chryssa went searching about in the corners of the field for flowers, which there grew very tall and strong, out of reach of the plough and harrow. Many of them were too tall for her to reach, but when Mr. Ruthven had done speaking to the men he came after Chryssa and cut as many flowers for her as she wanted.

“Now deary,” he said, “do you think you can walk home?”

“O yes,” said Chryssa, “I’m not a bit tired.”

“Well I am —” said Mr. Ruthven, — “two bits. How would you like to ride home in the cart?”

“O dearly!” said Chryssa. “Why grandpa, that would be splendid!”

Mr. Ruthven smiled, and took her over to

where the cart stood, well filled with corn ears, and then he lifted her up to a seat on the very front of the cart, with the yellow corn at her back, and he sat by her side.

“We sha’n’t go very fast, deary,” he said, “but then there’s no danger that the oxen will run away.”

Run away!—no indeed, nothing was further from their thoughts. The oxen jogged on towards home, never slower never faster,—whether Aaron cracked his whip or let it hang over his shoulder seemed to make little difference. But the day was so beautiful, and the air so pleasant, and every field and flower so gay, that Chryssa only wished the ride longer. Her hands were full of flowers, and in her lap she had several ears of unripe corn which were kept for roasting.

It happened very fortunately that Miss Flint was going to bake,—the table was covered with loaves of bread, and pies, and tin pans of gingerbread; and the great brick oven was full of blazing wood. Now there could not be a better place to roast corn than the mouth of this oven;

and Chryssa at once began to husk her corn, picking off even every bit of silk, and then stuck one of the ears on a fork and set it down to roast. And roast it did, fast enough,—the only difficulty was that Chryssa came near being roasted too, the fire was so hot. But the corn was excellent, and quite worth the trouble of roasting.

“Now Chryssa,” said Miss Flint, as she began to rake the coals out of the oven, “there’s a little bit of paste in the pantry, and two or three apples I had left over—so if you want to make a pie you can.”

“A pie!” said Chryssa.

“Yes, a pie,” said Miss Flint. “Take one of those pattypans, and some sugar, and make as much muss as you like.”

Muss was not the height of Chryssa’s ambition, but the pie was irresistible. She laid down the ear of corn and ran away to wash her hands, and then with untold delight and gravity plunged into the mysteries of piemaking. The apples were sliced with wonderful care and deliberation, the

sugar and cinnamon sprinkled in with fingers that almost trembled — they were so afraid of missing the right proportion, and even at that point the pattypan looked fascinating. But when the paste work began, — when Chryssa felt the soft mass flattening down beneath the persuasions of a real roller in her own little hands, — the excitement was great! She did not speak nor laugh, but her cheeks grew even more rosy than they had been at the oven mouth. How beautifully the apples suffered themselves to be shut in, only poking up the paste a little in remonstrance, — how carefully Chryssa cut four little slits to let the steam off: and as for the pie's scalloped edge — it *was* due to the pattypan, no doubt, but Chryssa could not help feeling that she had some hand in it. With a deep sigh of gratification she set the little dish among all the big ones on the table, and ran off to wash the rest of that most important paste from her fingers. And truth compels me to add that the pie was good: Miss Flint baked it in the big oven, and Chryssa and Sybil eat it up; the rest of the family contenting

themselves in the most obliging manner, with large pies, which were baked in a common pan with a straight edge.

Of course by this time Chryssa's spirit of enterprise was fairly excited, and in the afternoon what did she set herself to do, but to catch the grey kitten!—which never had been caught, which never intended to be,—the one kitten of all the troop that could not be cajoled, even with cups of milk, or touching mews, or the presence of the old cat herself. From behind the garden fence the grey kitten had surveyed the old cat asleep in Chryssa's lap, and the other kittens at play around her, but was never tempted from her hiding place. But this day Chryssa tried a new plan. She set a saucer of warm milk in the great shed at the back of the house, and hid herself behind the door; there she stood—mewing in her most enticing way. But for a long time nothing came in but a sparrow or two—except once, when the old cat kindly walked in and drank up all the milk. However, as she was doubtless hungry, Chryssa forgave her, and


filled the saucer again. But after that, it seemed as if nothing would come, — Chryssa was almost discouraged. She looked through the little window, and peeped through the door crack where she stood, but with no comfort, — clearly the grey kitten did not mean to come. And I suppose nothing could have been further from the grey kitten's intentions; but just as she crossed the chip yard to find a bird for her supper, she heard one of Chryssa's irresistible mews, — the grey kitten paused — and with kittens as with men, "he who hesitates is lost." Slowly the little cushioned feet came near the shed, carefully did grey puss look about for enemies, but of course she could not see what was behind the door, though Chryssa could see her perfectly well, through the crack. At the shed door the kitten paused again and looked in — but there was only a saucer of sweet white milk, and the kitten was hungry. So in she stepped, and began to lap the milk fast enough, and when she was fairly engaged Chryssa pushed the door softly to, and the grey kitten was a prisoner!

Why should a door that is shut look so different from a door that is open? —

Chryssa stood very still, but not so the kitten. At once she quitted the milk, and sped along to the further end of the shed and hid herself behind a barrel. Chryssa waited for her to come out — but nothing was less likely to happen. So after a while Chryssa went to the barrel herself, stooped softly down, and very softly put down her hand and seized the kitten. If she could but have held her! — for then with stroking, and coaxing, and patting, and warm milk, the grey kitten would have had a fine time of it. But not comprehending all these advantages, puss struggled and growled and kicked and spit, and finally drew her claws down Chryssa's arm in a long and very determined scratch — certainly her paw did not feel like velvet then. And Chryssa promptly let her go, for a *fight* with the grey kitten was the last thing she wanted. But the kitten went no more to the barrel. She flew up and down the shed, sprang at the windows, and dashed about in a perfect fury of

anger or fright or despair ; Chryssa looking on in amazement, squeezing her own arm, which began to smart a good deal. But presently she opened the door, and away flew the grey kitten, with her tail out and as big again as usual, nor even stopped till she was safe in the darkest corner under the barn. I don't know which was most glad, Chryssa or the kitten ! — For both hearts had been beating very fast, and as Chryssa went up stairs to wash the blood from her arm, she thought to herself it was well she got off with only one scratch.

CHAPTER XX.

HILE all these things were going on,—while the children were swinging in the new swing, and the grey kitten was recovering from her fright, there was a great deal doing in the woods and on the hills. Every night Jack Frost came out and worked away till morning; painting some of the leaves red, and some of them yellow, and scattering others on the ground by handfuls. His step must have been very heavy, for the flowers hung their heads and looked quite crushed, and the squash vines were shrivelled and crumpled up; but the golden rod, and yarrow, and cardinal flower, were as straight up and bright as ever. Jack Frost was a great friend to the squirrels, for he opened the thick walnut husks and the prickly chestnut burrs with his icy fingers, as their little soft paws could never have done. He even picked out some of the nuts and threw them on the

ground, though *that* the squirrels could do as well as he. They liked to run up the tall trees, and skip along the branches; and then with one great nut for a mouthful, or with cheeks stuffed out with chestnuts, to dance and spring from tree to tree, till they reached the one that held their nest.

Now Chryssa and Sybil were not squirrels—neither could they climb trees, and yet they thought they should like some chestnuts.

So one fair morning the whole family set off for the woods; even Miss Flint took a basket and trudged along with the rest, and Aaron carried a long pole to knock off the burrs, and Mr. Ruthven mounted the old horse and rode slowly on before.

The chestnut trees were very large, and where they stood in the woods very tall; nothing but squirrels could climb some of them. And the squirrels were up there already,—Chryssa could hear them bark, or say “Chip! chip!” in their glee at being squirrels and nothing else. How stupid and tiresome Aaron’s

pole must have looked to their bright eyes! —it was so much quicker just to gnaw off the little burr stems!—and as for the baskets, no squirrel would surely have used one so long as he could dig a burrow or find a single hollow tree.

But where the chestnut trees grew out in the open meadow they had not grown up so tall and slim, but had spread out sideways instead, and were big and burly and easy to climb. And though Aaron was nothing like so pretty as a squirrel, he sent the nuts down much faster. In a vain desire to pick them all up at once, the children scampered about—the burrs patting their heads and thumping their backs in a very distracting manner, and making them laugh almost too much to work. Often too, the chestnuts slipped out of the burrs and came down alone, falling by twos and threes and hiding away in the grass; and then everybody rushed to get the prize which would not prick their fingers. But after all, the most of the nuts had to be carefully picked out, or maybe hammered out on a flat stone. There was no danger that

anybody would faint for want of food—the chestnuts were as sweet and good as they could be. But everybody got hungry, nevertheless, and when lunch time came they sat down on the grass under the shadow, having excellent appetites—if they had no table.

Doubtless the squirrels were hungry too, and enjoyed their lunch, but what a simple repast!—acorns and nuts, and a drink from the spring, without even the ceremony of a mullein leaf. What did they know of apple pie?—the apples themselves, just as they came out of the orchard, the squirrels might have liked well enough; and would to a certainty, had they been peaches.

How fairly the sun shone as the party trooped towards home! how sweetly the wind blew, and used its hair brushes!

“Aunt Esther,” said Sybil, “what shall we do this afternoon?”

“What would you like to do?”

“I should like a good long walk,” said Sybil, —“it’s too pleasant to be in.”

"O yes," said Chryssa, "so should I."

"How would a drive do instead? — I've had about walk enough for to-day."

"But who'd drive?" said Chryssa. "Grandpa said *he* was going to the field — and so's Aaron."

"I will drive," said Mrs. Rutherford. "O I know how, I assure you."

"That would be very funny," said Sybil, — "are you sure you know how, aunt Esther?"

"That would be splendid," said Chryssa. "I'd rather have aunt Esther drive than any one else in the whole world."

"If she won't turn us over," said Sybil, as Mrs. Rutherford told Aaron to harness the horse and bring him up at a particular hour.

"I know *you* turned me over once," said Chryssa — "don't you remember, Sybil? in my little wicker wagon. It was on the flag stones, too. But I didn't get hurt."

"To-morrow's your birthday, Chryssie," said Mrs. Rutherford coming up. "What shall we do to celebrate it?"

"Is it?" said Chryssa. "O I guess we needn't do anything, aunt Èsther," she said twining her arms round Mrs. Rutherford,— "it'll be celebrated enough. Well Syb — you needn't laugh,— what are you laughing at?"

"At you," said Sybil frankly. "Because you don't know what you said, Chryssie."

"Yes I do," said Chryssa. "Why didn't I?"

"I'll tell you what I shall do," said Mrs. Rutherford smiling. "I shall make some eight-year-old cake for tea!"

"And sha'n't we have tea up on the hill?" said Sybil eagerly.

"If you like. Only we must have tea very early, because the evenings are cool."

"I know what *I'll* do!" said Sybil. "But you needn't ask what it is, Chryssie, for I sha'n't tell you yet."

Chryssa did not ask, but she walked into the house, thinking that her birthday was like to be celebrated now if it never had been before.

Not even Sybil could be afraid of an overturn that afternoon, Mrs. Rutherford drove so

well and so carefully. And the roads and the fields were as pretty as they could be. But when they had gone on and on for a long distance, and had even turned towards home, Mrs. Rutherford let the old horse know that she wanted to go out of the main road into one that was all grass-grown. There were wheel tracks there indeed, but the grass half hid them. The road was very hilly, not very wide, and wound up and down without reaching many houses or even many trees. But at last they reached a thick bit of woodland, and beyond that lay the burying-ground. There were not many trees there either, but the grass was short and green, and the white and grey stones looked very peaceful in the shining of the afternoon sun. A little low white fence shut it in from the surrounding meadows and grain fields, and at the white gate Mrs. Rutherford stopped.

“Aunt Esther!” said Sybil — “you’re not going to get out?”

“Yes I am,” said Mrs. Rutherford. “I love some of these old stones, dear child, and I want

to see them again before we go. You and Chryssie may get out or not, just as you choose."

"I want to," said Chryssa, and down she jumped, and Sybil followed. Softly Mrs. Rutherford opened the gate, and the children followed her, — treading softly, with a strange quiet feeling. Mrs. Rutherford walked on towards the further side, and then stood still. The children silently turned as she turned, from one stone to another, reading the words written there. What sweet words! — to tell of all Christ has done for his people, of their love and trust in him, — words telling that even their sleeping dust should one day be raised in glory, — that the glorified spirits were already in heaven. How strange the names looked! — there was the name of Mr. Ruthven's wife, and some of his children; and his wife's name had been Chryssa. The children stood silently looking.

"What makes you love to come here, aunt Esther?" said Sybil at last.

"It always rests me to come," said Mrs.

Rutherford, — “this place is so peaceful. Wherever else I feel tired or sad, I never do here. Look, Sybil, what beautiful words are written on these stones.”

“But you could read the same words in the Bible at home,” said Sybil doubtfully.

“Yes — but I love to read them here. I love to think how the Lord Jesus has carried one and another of his children safely through life and safely through death, — that this dust, which is all that remains of them on earth, shall be raised up in a new, glorious form, and that I shall see it so. For I believe that Jesus will do all this even for me!”

Brightly the sun shone down in the little field, gleaming on the fresh grass and glancing from the old stones, and the birds fluttered here and there, singing with full hearts. Over all, the blue sky spread out its pure canopy of truth.

“I don’t like to think of lying here,” said Sybil very softly.

“No — nor I, if this were all,” said Mrs.

Rutherford. "But I am willing my body should lie here for a little while,—then it shall be raised in glory. This always seems to me like a place where angels have left the dresses they do not want for a while—left them to be made over anew, more beautiful, more glorious."

"I like that!"—said Sybil—"then it's the place of angels' dresses. I wish everybody would call it so!"

"There must be one here," said Chryssa softly,— "see, Aunt Esther, what is on the stone—'So shall we ever be with the Lord.' That is where grandpa's wife has laid *her* dress."

"Yes, the words were always true of her," said Mrs. Rutherford. "All the people that are angels in heaven, begin to be angels on earth. And all the people that walk with Jesus here, in these poor earthly robes, shall surely walk with him there—'clothed in white, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.'"

"Forever with the Lord!—

Amen, so let it be."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE birthday morning was very fine. So bright indeed was the sunlight, so brilliant were the red leaves of the maples, so glittering and white was the frost on every clover leaf,—that at first Chryssa thought only of them; and never remembered that it was her birthday till Sybil started up in bed and called out,

“Chryssa, I wish you joy!”

Which seemed to be rather a needless wish, after all, for Chryssa looked every day as if she had joy enough.

“O thank you!” she said. “Sybil, I saw a red squirrel running along on the fence.”

“I do believe,” said Sybil, “that you’d think first of a squirrel—if it was your birthday fifty times over! But don’t go down stairs yet, Chryssie!—I want to go down first.”

“That’s very funny!” said Chryssa, stopping short with the latch in her hand. “Then you ought to have got up first.”

"Well you see I didn't want to do that," said Sybil. "But now Chryssa, you can just as well wait as not — go and look at the squirrel again."

Chryssa would have liked a nearer view; but however, she went to the window again and looked out very patiently, though thinking all the time how much she might do if she could only go down stairs. Meanwhile Sybil bustled about, but seemed to have more than herself to get ready; for she went diving into her trunk, and whispering to Mrs. Rutherford, and making a great fuss generally. Once Chryssa heard a very eager and very smothered, "Oh! — don't tell her!" — from Sybil, which made her feel very curious; but still she looked out at the bugloss waving its blue head by the roadside, and the little brook sparkling away in the meadow.

Then Mrs. Rutherford came and sat by her, and Sybil ran down stairs.

"Well Chryssie — how does it feel to be eight years old?" said her aunt smiling.

"I don't know" — said Chryssa, — "it feels just like yesterday. Only I want to go down."

"Eight years old!" — Mrs. Rutherford repeated. "I wonder if you are eight times as wise and eight times as good as you were when you were a baby?"

"I don't know!" Chryssa said, shaking her head about and then laying it down on Mrs. Rutherford's lap. "I s'pose I ought to be."

Mrs. Rutherford stroked her hair, and then stooped down and kissed her.

"When I think how God has kept you safe all these years," she said, — "how he has let you grow, and get strength, and learn to walk and talk and a great many other things; I feel as if I could never thank him enough, Chryssie."

"I wish I could thank him too," said Chryssa softly.

"Did you ever try to thank me for anything?" said Mrs. Rutherford.

"I never did much," said Chryssa shaking her head again, — "only I've tried to do just what you wanted me to sometimes."

"That is the way you must thank God. He says, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'"

Chryssa knew that was true, for she had often read it in the Bible, but she couldn't think how she came to forget it so often—it seemed so easy to remember and to do.

“God has kept you safe and happy all these years,” said Mrs. Rutherford again, “and therefore I think he will take care of you and keep you all the years that are to come; even if they should be ever so many. I am *sure* that he will if you follow him, Chryssie.”

Chryssa said nothing to that, and indeed she had not much chance, for Sybil now came running in and carried her off down stairs. And the very first thing Chryssa saw, was Mrs. Tortoiseshell with a broad red ribband round her neck. Other crimson and blue knots decked Chryssa's chair at the breakfast table, and two late wild roses stood in a glass and looked down at her empty plate.

Then Mr. Ruthven gave her two little cakes of maple sugar with remarkable scalloped edges, stowed away in a red Indian willow basket; and Miss Flint presented a little apple pie of about

the same dimensions. Mrs. Rutherford hung upon Chryssa's arm a gay little bag, with a still gayer needle-book and pincushion inside, and even a new scissors in a red morocco case. And then Sybil, turning a skilful pirouette of delight in the middle of the floor, said,

“Chryssa, I'll give you all my little blue cups and saucers. I haven't got 'em here, you know, but you can have 'em as soon as we get home. And only think, Chryssa! Uncle Ruth's coming to-day!—and we'll dress up the rooms and make a fuss.”

Between sugar, bag, blue cups, and “making a fuss,” Chryssa's mind was in a state of confusion that left her few words. However, if she did not manage to *say* much about her pleasure, everybody could see it in her face, and that did just as well. She sat gravely down in the ornamented chair, and looked at the wild roses; thinking to herself how good Sybil was to take so much trouble for her, and what a pity the little blue cups were not there for her breakfast service.

After breakfast, the two children at once set off after flowers and evergreens, Chryssa taking her new little basket along to be useful; and in such beautiful weather there could not be prettier work. Sybil had a basket too, a larger one, and they were soon filled, as well as the children's hands. Golden rod and yarrow and asters grew on the hillside; and by the road there were bugloss and white arrow-leaf, and beautiful flowering grasses. Then they broke off small hemlock branches, hanging full of little brown cones, and other twigs of red maple and golden hickory. Little snail shells were picked up too, and stems of wild rose, with now a flower and then a bunch of scarlet hips. So they came home, well loaded.

Now the fact was, that Miss Flint—in her store of crockery—had little that was fit for flowers. A tumbler would indeed hold those more delicate ones that were to stand on the table; but the hemlock boughs and maple leaves and tall grasses—where were they to go?—Even in a broken-nosed pitcher! Sybil and

Chryssa looked at it with extreme disgust when Miss Flint presented it, but look as they might there seemed to be nothing else in the house that was tall enough; and though the pitcher itself was the worse for being broken, for their purpose it was the better; as they could hide it entirely among the leaves, instead of having it poke its nose out. So the pitcher stood on the hearth in Mr. Rutherford's room, and then the children filled it with flowers and smothered it with evergreens, till not only the pitcher but the fireplace was full. The hemlock cones nodded in the breeze that blew in at the open windows, the golden rod waved back and forth, the rose-hips stood up stiff and red, and down on the hearth lay snail shells and acorns, making quite a pretty border.

Then the children went to put on their white frocks and gay sashes, and then set themselves to watch for the stage.

It came at last—looking just as yellow and dusty and lumbering as ever, and long before it reached the house, they could see a white

handkerchief wave from one of the windows, and knew that Mr. Rutherford had come.

It was a gay day after that. In the first place, he had brought a great basket of peaches, which of course made a commotion. In the next place, he had brought books for both the children,—and nobody could be unmoved at that. But the crowning beauty of the day was tea. For they were to have it out of doors, up on the east hill; and while they made their preparations in the house, the sun got ready for a most glorious setting.

Many journeys did the little feet make that afternoon, over the meadow and up the hill; and many was the stem of pennyroyal that wondered why it was stepped on, and yet gave only a sweet reply. Over the meadow and up the hill went cups and plates and tea spoons,—then while the children arranged these up came Miss Flint with a substantial basket of bread and butter, cake, sweetmeats and cheese. Sybil and Chryssa chose a low flat stone for the table, and covered it well; the centre spot being left

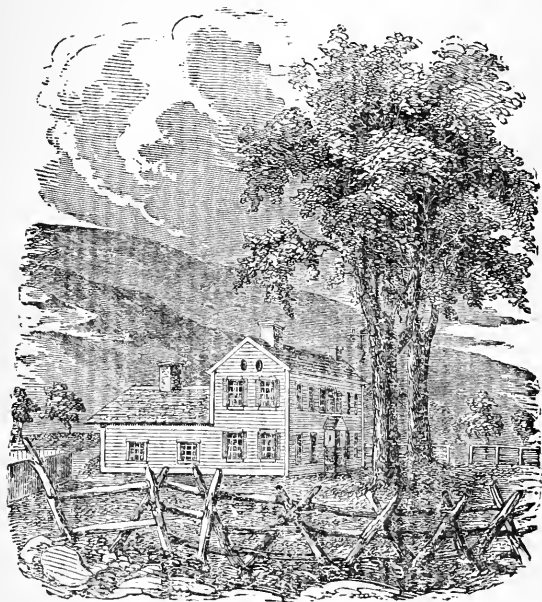
for the eight-year-old cake; which soon arrived in Mrs. Rutherford's hands, all white and frosted. There was a dish of cut peaches too, and all sorts of trifles, everywhere. There were plenty of little stone seats scattered about in the grass, and each person's napkin was laid on one of these, because the table was so full. Mrs. Rutherford's tea-tray, with the cups and saucers, had a stone to itself.

Everything was merry,—crickets and grasshoppers sprung away from under the children's feet; and in the great hard maple tree which swung its branches overhead, the birds had a concert. In the west, the sun poured out a flood of yellow beams, and coloured the clouds wondrously. Even the timid sheep ventured out from the shelter of the woods, and came nibbling nearer and nearer, lured on by the sweet short grass and perhaps by the sweet voices.

"The only bad thing," said Chryssa, "is that we've got to go away!"

Well, that was a fact. Even a birthnight tea, on the hilltop, must come to an end! If

must be owned that the cake held out better than anything; and made quite a show when there was not a single peach left, and not much



daylight; — but then it was so large, to begin with. Mrs. Rutherford's story lasted too, though not a bit too long the way she came to tell it was this.

Chryssa having made that sorrowful remark about going away (which meant from Hard Maple as well as the east hill) was then very silent, and sat sorrowfully looking down at the old house without saying another word. How green the hill beyond it looked!—and the meadow where the hermitage was. The great elm trees were showing yellow leaves now, and they shook them down upon the brown roof and the little porch with every wind that blew. Yes, the leaves were quitting the trees, and they must all quit Hard Maple; and so little did Chryssa feel like a birthday party when she thought of it, that she sat there with her eyes full of tears. Whereupon, Mrs. Rutherford at once began her story.

THE MILESTONES.

“What are milestones?” said Chryssa.

“On some roads,” said Mrs. Rutherford, “there is a long stone set up by the wayside at every mile, to tell the traveller how far he has come and how far he has to go. So for part of the

way coming here, the milestones say, 'From Round Hill, so many miles;' and then the last part it is 'To Hard Maple, so many.' Well on the life roads that you and I travel, there is a stone for every year."

"What's on them?" said Sybil.

"Different things" — said Mrs. Rutherford. "It depends upon the road. The first ones indeed are pretty much alike, on all, — 'From the great wicker cradle one year,' — or, 'From short frocks, two,' — or, 'From dolls, one.'"

How the children laughed! — Chryssa's eyes were perfectly shining, with the tears and the laughter.

"The road which I am to tell you about," said Mrs. Rutherford, "was one which began in a great house, and led by all sorts of fine things at first; but it was strange, that while the child had everything she wanted, her name should be 'Wait.' Perhaps her mother wanted to teach her patience in that way. She was a thoughtful little child, and always took good notice of the milestones on her way.

“Now from the little path where she began her life, a great many roads branched off, and all sorts of milestones and signboards tempted her this way and that. And many of these had two inscriptions; for when people did not like the name of a place they changed it,—and then of course there was a new direction put on the milestone. The old ones were often half covered with moss and grass, and the storms which had beaten upon them for a great many years sometimes made the writing quite indistinct; but the new was fresh and clean cut, and now and then even in gilt letters.

“For a while, little Wait was led carefully on past the wrong turnings and into the right ones, by her mother; but when she died Wait was left alone: and except prayer, all the help she had was an excellent magnifying glass, by means of which she could make out the old inscriptions. So with this in her pocket, she began her journey in earnest. But she did not use the glass much at first,—indeed almost forgot that she had it; and not content with the new writing on

the milestones, she put on more for herself—so when the sign said ‘To school,’ Wait wrote under that, ‘To be very accomplished and very much admired.’

“This went on for a good while,—then Wait began to find that neither the new inscriptions nor her own were always quite true. Where the milestone had told her, ‘A year of balls and parties,’ and Wait had written under that, ‘Gay dresses, and jewels, and admiration,’—when the next stone was reached, it said, ‘From a long fit of sickness.’ What the old inscription below all would have said she had not looked to see. But now she began to take out her glass and search for every one. They did not tell her little particulars,—they were just of two kinds: one said, ‘To the world,’—the other, ‘To heaven.’ O what gilded letters lay over the one!—and what words of self-denial and trouble sometimes were over the other!—it was wonderful. ‘From the loss of money—or of friends;’ ‘From sickness, or danger,’—and under all, in the old worn letters, ‘To heaven!’ It did not say

how many miles,—they might be many or few; but that was ‘the way.’ Wait was glad to walk in it now, though she never could get quite used to the different milestones; for sometimes beneath very promising directions her glass spelled out the words, ‘To the world.’ She always used her glass now. But though she kept up her old habit of writing on the milestones, and though she wrote very different things from those first ones, yet she could not find that they came any more true. For where she had said, ‘To do a great deal for God this year,’—perhaps the whole year she was sick, and not able to do a single thing—that she could see; and where she wrote, ‘To a sorrowful year, all alone,’—there God filled the year with plenty. So at last, she gave up writing a word,—just looked to see that the old inscription said ‘To heaven,’ and then went gladly on.”

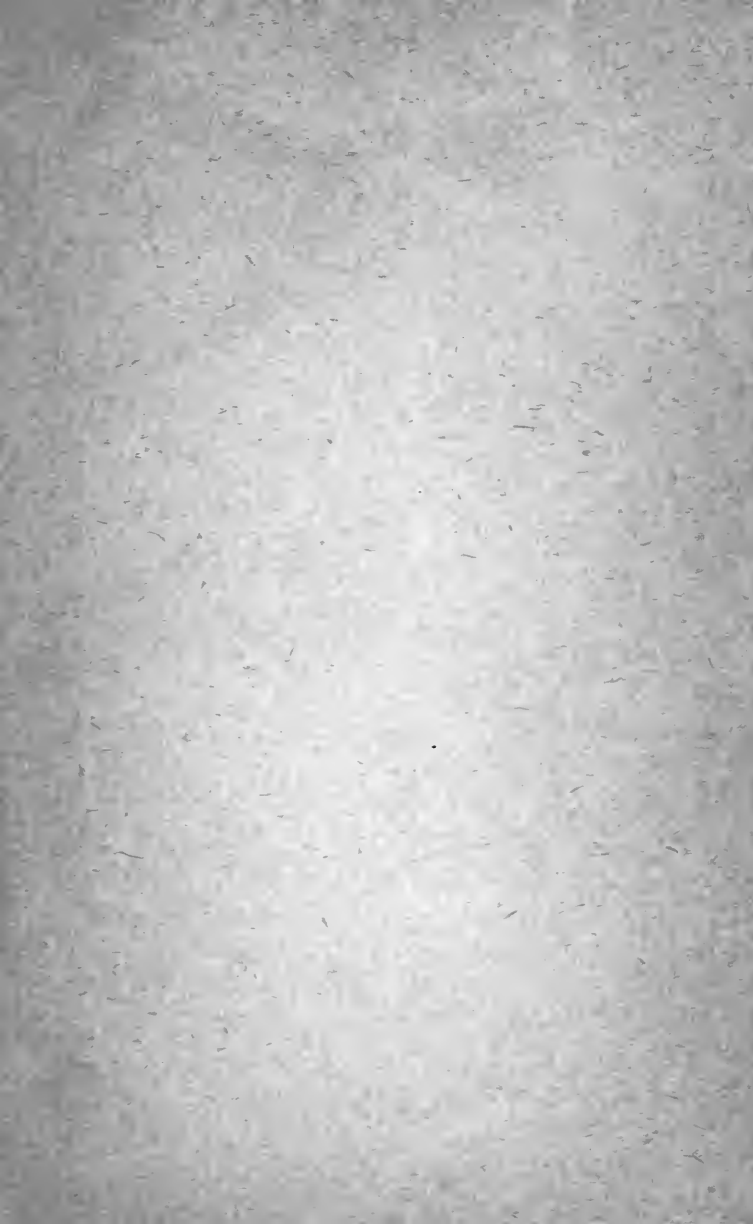
Silently the little party broke up and came down the hill, thinking of those milestones. “To heaven,”—yes, that was the best,—no matter by what road; though they were very glad that this year’s stone could say, “From Hard Maple.”

They all went away next day, leaving Mr. Ruthven watching them from the little porch. Chryssa looked back as long as she could see him, and then cried till she couldn't see anything else.

“To heaven!” — the miles were not many then!







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